

## HUMANISM AND CREATIVITY IN THE RENAISSANCE

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VOLUME 136







Ronald G. Witt

# HUMANISM AND CREATIVITY IN THE RENAISSANCE

*Essays in Honor of Ronald G. Witt*

EDITED BY

CHRISTOPHER S. CELENZA AND KENNETH GOUWENS



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## RONALD G. WITT—AN APPRECIATION

T. C. Price Zimmermann

Two salient qualities distinguish Ronald Witt: extraordinary energy and extraordinary generosity. He is one of those marvelous individuals whose mere presence lifts the spirit, a life-enhancer, to use Berenson's term. His abundant good nature, buoyant optimism, instinctive sympathy for others, and zest for life and learning have made him an inspiration for his students and a boon for his friends.

Far from being "solitary and cloistered," Ron's many virtues have been tested again and again by what can only be called a highly strenuous life, one combining the *vita contemplativa* with the *vita activa* in a fashion that might have daunted the most dedicated Civic Humanist. Both the pace at which they live and the scholarly productivity of Ron and his admirable wife Mary Ann, a professor of French and Italian literature, have long amazed their less energetic friends. Somehow in the midst of demanding teaching schedules, extensive administrative responsibilities, wide professional commitments, church and community service, incessant travel, constant hospitality, and a full family life they have continued to pursue ambitious programs of research. Their maintaining a gracious home has been all the more remarkable in that the many grants and fellowships they have received have been mostly for research abroad, often in different countries, and on at least one occasion with Mary Ann on one side of the globe and Ron on the other.

As a teacher Ron is renowned at Duke for the intensity, energy, and drama of his lecturing, which has engendered many legends. He received the Duke Alumni Association's Distinguished Teaching Award, based upon student nominations, in the first year it was offered. A significant outgrowth of his commitment to undergraduate education has been his collaboration with Mary Ann and others on a superlative text for humanities courses, a venture revealing the breadth of the authors' culture and erudition.

In scholarship, as in life, Ron has been eminently his own person. In an era that encourages projects with immediate returns, he

has had the courage to pursue his fundamental, long-term study of the origins of Italian humanism, a labor of love spanning his entire scholarly career, beginning with his Harvard doctoral thesis on Coluccio Salutati and concluding with two long-awaited volumes, the first of which has recently appeared. Its enthusiastic reception by reviewers reflects in no small part a sense of wonder at the breadth, depth, and duration, as well as the brilliance of his scholarship, and it has already won two of the most prestigious prizes offered, the Gordan Prize of the Renaissance Society of America and the Barzun Prize of the American Philosophical Society.

From his ultimate roots in Michigan farmland, Ron derives a vigorous outlook on life, including a strong work ethic. Few would guess that, like Teddy Roosevelt, he had a long and determined battle to overcome illness in his youth. Yet, marvel of nature that he is, he is able to imbibe with the Sybarites while laboring with the Troglodytes, seamlessly uniting the genial, outgoing, and gregarious side of his nature with the imperative of "profitable labor." During the writing of our doctoral dissertations in Florence, several of us would gather for congenial dinners in a local trattoria where the wine flowed freely. But while the rest of us retired afterward to bed, Ron would return to his desk where he worked well past midnight. How did he manage to do it? I once inquired. "The first hour is hard," he said. The next day he would be at the archives when they opened at eight in the morning, remaining until they closed at one, when we would go to another trattoria for lunch. Instead of the "Neapolitan exercises" that some of us indulged in after lunch, however, Ron would spend the time in the library until the archives reopened at three. The same ethic that has marked him as a scholar has characterized him as a teacher, administrator, colleague, and friend. Accessibility of person and generosity with time are attributes entailing long hours and hard work.

Ron's extraordinary versatility and *joie de vivre* bring to mind Burckhardt's characterization of a prominent Renaissance figure as "winning from life all it had to give," or perhaps Machiavelli's wondering assessment of Lorenzo de' Medici, "to see him in his lighter moments and then in his graver ones, was to see, as it were, two distinct personalities linked by hidden bonds." An accomplished dancer, long admired at Boston's renowned waltz evenings, and, along with Mary Ann, an enthusiastic teacher of dance, he appears as another Fred Astaire. To see him at the seashore, one might think



he had spent his life on the beaches of California. Welcome everywhere, he moves easily in any situation, whether dining in the great hall at Brolio with liveried footmen in attendance or having Sunday lunch with an off-duty waiter and his family.

All his life Ron has coped stoically, to the admiration of his friends, with the harassments sent by fate to test him when engaged in the most innocent activities: being bitten by a copperhead while gardening; attacked by a swan while swimming in a pond; knocked into a ditch by a vicious dog while jogging and his wrist broken the day before his departure for Europe on sabbatical; injured by the collapse of his deck while he was dancing with a guest, whom he managed to shield from harm at the cost of shattering his arm. It is characteristic that he presided at the Renaissance Society of America's annual meeting with stitches still in place from a recent operation. At the millennium meeting in Florence he gave a paper and sat loyally through sessions despite a raging infection in a root canal kept in check by daily doses of penicillin.

No one speaking of Ron fails to mention his playful sense of humor, which has delighted and bewildered all who know him, an academic version of the American deadpan tease. Everyone will have his own recollections. While living in Florence we both wearied of the endless prying questions from visiting Americans as to what we were doing, how we were supported, etc., etc. Ron's response was characteristic. I became accustomed to visitors rushing up to me at parties with exclamations such as, "I hear you are the creator of Smokey the Bear and living in Florence on the royalties!" To an inquiry about anesthesia practices at the Duke hospital, Ron casually told of the piece of wood given favored patients to bite on during operations. The exempla go on and on.

A unique individual, an inspiring teacher, a patient and generous mentor, a profound scholar, a devoted husband and father, a friend for all seasons: small wonder that the students and colleagues of Ronald Witt have united to honor him with this *Festschrift*.



## INTRODUCTION\*

Christopher S. Celenza and Kenneth Gouwens

In the pithy appreciation of Ronald G. Witt that opens this volume, his colleague and friend T. C. Price Zimmermann, who has known Professor Witt for nearly half a century, highlights his extraordinary energy and generosity. The pages that follow comprise original contributions from a range of scholars whose work and careers Witt has touched in myriad ways. Intellectual historians, social and political historians, a historian of philosophy and an art historian: specialists in various temporal and geographical regions of the Renaissance world have come together here to address specific topics reflecting some of the major themes that have woven their way through Ronald Witt's intellectual *cursus*. The essays vary widely in focus—and appropriately so, inasmuch as they suggest something of the range of Professor Witt's interests and influence. While some essays offer fresh readings of canonical texts and explore previously unnoticed lines of filiation among them, others present “discoveries,” including a hitherto “lost” text and overlooked manuscripts that are here edited for the first time. This engagement with little-known material reflects another of our dedicatee's characteristics: a passion for work with original sources in the libraries and archives of Europe.

The contributions that follow are gathered under three rubrics: (1) “Politics and the Revival of Antiquity”; (2) “Humanism, Religion, and Moral Philosophy”; and (3) “Erudition and Innovation.” These groupings correspond to major emphases in Ronald Witt's scholarship: to each of these subjects, he has devoted a monograph and numerous articles.

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\* The editors wish to thank all those who have helped to bring this volume to timely completion. We are grateful to our editors at Brill—Tanja Cowall, Boris van Gool, and Hendrik van Leusen—who have discharged their responsibilities with expertise, efficiency, and unfailing good humor. We owe a special debt to Arjo Vanderjagt—himself a distinguished scholar of Renaissance thought and culture—who has taken a keen interest in this project from its inception, and who welcomed the refereed manuscript into the series he edits, “Brill's Studies in Intellectual History.” No venue could be more fitting for a book dedicated to Ronald Witt.

*Politics and the Revival of Antiquity*

Inspired by one of his mentors, Hans Baron, Ronald Witt has always been acutely sensitive to the political contexts in which the revival of antiquity took place, as well as to ways that scholarship on antiquity provided humanists with instruments for analyzing their own social and political world. Evident throughout Witt's career, these interests are especially prominent in his early writings on Florentine politics and on Civic Humanism. We think, for example, of his essays on the views of politics and history in Coluccio Salutati's *De tyranno*; on the significance for Republican thought of an early Quattrocento Florentine tract responding to a Milanese invective; and on office-holding by new families in Florence in the politically crucial years around 1400.<sup>1</sup> Witt's first book, a study of Salutati's public letters on behalf of the Florentine Republic, was fittingly dedicated to Hans Baron, whose own interrogation of Salutati's political thought in his *Crisis of the Early Italian Renaissance* inspired many of the questions that initially guided Witt's inquiry.<sup>2</sup>

Section One of our collection begins with an essay by James Hankins, a leading expert on another Florentine chancellor, Leonardo Bruni. Here, Hankins focuses on the relationship of classicizing humanism to vernacular culture. After opening with an elegant historiographical synthesis, the essay analyzes Bruni's vernacular writings, before examining how and why a number of his Latin works were translated into the vernacular. Bruni's case serves as an exemplar of an important insight: that although humanists were in one respect creating an "elite" culture, they saw beyond matters of linguistic imitation, many of them believing that the values they cherished in ancient texts were so important for the lives of an active citizenry—not all of whose members could be expected to learn Latin and

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<sup>1</sup> "The *De Tyranno* and Coluccio Salutati's View of Politics and Roman History," *Nuova Rivista Storica*, 53 (1969), 434–74; "Cino Rinuccini's *Risponsiva alla invettiva di Messer Antonio Lusco*," *Renaissance Quarterly*, 23 (1970), 133–49; and "Florentine Politics and the Ruling Class, 1382–1407," *Journal of Medieval and Renaissance Studies*, 6 (1976), 243–67.

<sup>2</sup> *Coluccio Salutati and his Public Letters* (Geneva, 1976). Also noteworthy is Witt's contribution to the Festschrift for Baron: "The Rebirth of the Concept of Republican Liberty in Italy," in *Renaissance: Studies in Honor of Hans Baron*, ed. Anthony Molho and John A. Tedeschi (Florence, 1971), 173–99. Cf. Hans Baron, *The Crisis of the Early Italian Renaissance: Civic Humanism and Republican Liberty in an Age of Classicism and Tyranny* (2 vols.; Princeton, 1955, and 1-vol. rev. ed., Princeton, 1966).

Greek well—that those values needed to be translated, culturally as well as literally, into the vernacular.

In the second essay, Anthony F. D’Elia broaches another important issue: whether stylistic imitation can contribute to ideological change. D’Elia’s point of departure is a little-known oration by the Riminese humanist Pietro Parleo, which is here edited for the first time. In the work, Parleo defends a captain who disobeyed a direct order of Sigismondo Malatesta, thereby committing a capital offense. Using examples from Livy and other classical authors, Parleo describes the captain using the value system of ancient republicanism, even as he is presenting the oration to a despot. D’Elia compares the use that Parleo makes of classical sources with the use to which Machiavelli later puts them. The key point comes through clearly: although Parleo’s oration may have been no more than a rhetorical exercise, it exemplifies how, in following ancient forms, Renaissance thinkers could often find themselves—sometimes even unwittingly—adhering to ancient values.

Robert Black presents a synthetic portrait of a figure on whom he is the world’s leading expert: Benedetto Accolti who, like his fellow Aretine, Bruni, and like Salutati, went on to become chancellor of Florence. This is the first short summary of Accolti’s career and importance to appear in English, and it is a definitive one. Enriched with new manuscript discoveries, the essay also includes a thoughtful assessment of a dialogue in which Accolti uses a discussion of the quarrel of ancients and moderns as a framework for launching pointed criticisms at the moral condition of the contemporary papal court.

Staying within the Florentine environment, Melissa Bullard sheds new light on the collecting practices of the fifteenth century and, in particular, upon their affective dimension. Focusing on Lorenzo de’ Medici’s accumulation and deployment of his famous gem collection, she shows how physical remnants of antiquity could serve as social markers and endowers of *virtù*. Thus, the tangible past facilitated the creation of lived identities in the present, as patrons defined themselves within the interwoven contexts of the revival of antiquity and the pursuit of *honore et utile* that defined Quattrocento status-seeking and influenced social relations.

Mark Jurdjevic offers a provocative analysis of a little-studied set of writings: the *Discorsi palleschi*, recommendations by Medici partisans about how to deal with possible instability after the suppression

of the Florentine republics of 1494–1512 and 1527–30. Overwhelmingly, the authors turned to a re-theorized variety of aristocratic “republicanism” that in effect represented oligarchy. In so doing, they wound up transforming earlier “civic” traditions of humanism: retaining the classicism, but jettisoning the ideals of a more open, active citizenry.

Turning our attention north of the Alps, John Headley deftly analyzes the relationship between Guillaume Budé and Thomas More in the years 1515–20. This crucial half-decade saw the ascent of Francis I to the French throne and Budé’s publication of *De asse*, his complex treatise on wealth and its physical forms in antiquity; and on the English side More’s publication of *Utopia* and his own fateful decision to remain in government service. By juxtaposing the two treatises, and assessing their significance in the contexts of the authors’ correspondence and their careers, Headley elucidates the contributions that both made to early sixteenth-century discussions of the role and the suitability of the intellectual in politics. While taking us far from the particularities of Florence, this essay—like the others in Part One, and like much of Ronald Witt’s work—enriches our understanding of the dynamic interplay of the humanists’ revival of antiquity with the political exigencies of their own distinct historical moments.

### *Humanism, Religion, and Moral Philosophy*

Part Two of our collection centers on another cluster of concerns integral to Professor Witt’s scholarship: “Humanism, Religion, and Moral Philosophy.” In his second monograph, a sophisticated biography of Coluccio Salutati, he assesses with unprecedented thoroughness, precision, and eloquence his subject’s intellectual growth and pivotal place in the development of the Humanist movement.<sup>3</sup> Dedicated to the memory of Witt’s doctoral advisor at Harvard, Myron P. Gilmore, this comprehensive study offers a profound, well-rounded understanding of Salutati’s thought and its contexts in his

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<sup>3</sup> *Hercules at the Crossroads: The Life, Works, and Thought of Coluccio Salutati* (Durham, N.C., 1983). Among related essays, see in particular his “Coluccio Salutati and the Conception of the *Poeta Theologus* in the Fourteenth Century,” *Renaissance Quarterly*, 30 (1977), 538–63.

experience. To be sure, political issues are not absent from this narrative, but its focus is elsewhere: namely, on Salutati's efforts to integrate—or at least to juxtapose with less tension—his classicism and his Christianity. Thus, the chancellor's engagement with civic concerns is less central here than are his ruminations on whether the ancient pagan poets could truly be eloquent, his efforts to fashion a Christian Aristotelianism, and his growing ambivalence in his later years—precisely in the critical decade around 1400—about the usefulness of humanistic studies to those who took seriously the call to progress along the path to Christian virtue.

Part Two begins with a piece by Timothy Kircher that bridges the Tre- and Quattrocento, vernacularity and Latinity. Kircher discovers an affinity between the Leon Battista Alberti of the *Intercenales*—those short, ironic dinner pieces written in elegant humanist Latin—and the Giovanni Boccaccio of the *Decameron*. This affinity is to be found in their use of irony, in a skeptical attitude toward publicly lived virtues, and in a style of moralizing that is anti-didactic in form, even as it communicates a powerful critique of existing modes of behavior.

John Monfasani's study recovers and edits a work hitherto thought lost: the final section of a dialogue *On Faith* by George Amiroutzes, a Byzantine intellectual and native of Trebizond who entered the household of Mehmed the Conqueror after that sultan took Trebizond in 1461. The work records a sustained conversation about Christianity between Amiroutzes and the Sultan which, even if it has been idealized in a literary fashion, does seem actually to have occurred. The original Greek text remains lost, and prior knowledge of this treatise was restricted to an incomplete Latin version. Monfasani recovers the lost portion and edits the treatise in its entirety. In addition, he provides more concrete proof than previously available that its translator into Latin was Zanolbi Acciaiuoli, O.P. (1461–1519).

Next, Edward P. Mahoney makes a compelling case that Marsilio Ficino be considered not just a member of the Platonic tradition in his capacity as a translator and an exegete of Plato, but as someone who strove to be a philosopher in his own right, taking part in three separate areas of a lengthy ancient and medieval tradition of philosophical debate. Ficino comments suggestively on the problems of metaphysical hierarchy in the universe; epistemologically, he is committed to a variety of “innatism,” ringing his own particular changes on traditional Platonic *anamnesis* (recollection); and with

respect to political philosophy, in Mahoney's view, Ficino harbored an ultimate preference for monarchy owing to his deep commitment to a theory of Platonic forms.

Returning our attention north of the Alps, Charles Fantazzi elucidates the early Parisian years of Juan Luís Vives. Drawing on some recent discoveries, Fantazzi shows that Vives remained in the city from 1509 to 1514, not departing for Bruges in 1512, as has generally been supposed. While lecturing and studying in Paris, in part under the humanist Nicole Bérault, Vives wrote *praelectiones*, inaugural lectures, which in that context could also serve as introductions to the course. Fantazzi's analysis shows how these orations foreshadow Vives' later works, even as they offer insight into early sixteenth-century Parisian intellectual life. The early Vives emerges here as one unafraid to challenge entrenched authority; and certain themes are sounded which Vives will later develop in depth as part of his enduring masterpiece of pedagogical and cultural criticism, *De disciplinis libri xx*.

In the last essay of Part Two, Anthony Grafton investigates the way a wide-ranging group of sixteenth-century intellectuals dealt with the phenomenon of dreaming. They prescribed foods that were believed to control the types of dreams one had, delved into all manner of ancient sources to elucidate their meaning, and in general made dream-investigation a part of the "technologies of the self" that were fast developing in this age of Erasmus and Montaigne, Castiglione and Della Porta, Luther and Melanchthon. Grafton gives particular attention to the phenomenon of prophetic dreams, whose destabilizing potential was especially dangerous in an age of fundamental religious conflict.

### *Erudition and Innovation*

The remaining four essays approach in diverse ways the themes of erudition and innovation—themes that receive lucid articulation in Professor Witt's magisterial study of the origins of humanism, "*In the Footsteps of the Ancients*."<sup>4</sup> A persuasive reconceptualization of the devel-

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<sup>4</sup> "*In the Footsteps of the Ancients*": *The Origins of Humanism from Lovato to Bruni* (Leiden, 2000). A selection of eleven essays by Ronald Witt, including several related to that



opment of humanism as a stylistic ideal, this much-honored book opens with a dedication to the memory of Paul Oskar Kristeller, whose prodigious contributions to the study of Italian Humanism and its relationship to Medieval rhetoric provided a key stimulus for Witt's own erudite innovations.

Paul F. Grendler starts us off by examining the life and work of a pioneering historian, Georg Voigt, whose contributions deserve greater recognition than they have tended to receive. Voigt's 1859 masterpiece *Die Wiederbelebung des classischen Alterthums oder das erste Jahrhundert des Humanismus* (*The Revival of Classical Antiquity; or, The First Century of Humanism*), is often overshadowed by Jacob Burckhardt's classic *Die Cultur der Renaissance in Italien*, published only a year later. Grendler offers a portrait of Voigt, showing how the East Prussian historian became part of nineteenth-century Germany's rich scholarly tradition. In Grendler's reckoning, Voigt's work on the Italian Renaissance emerges as an original, sharply focused account concerned primarily with the revival of antiquity, the location and chronology of humanism, and that movement's literary taxonomies.

David Lines follows, presenting a challenging rereading of the relationship between Italian humanism and universities. Instead of seeing "two cultures"—scholasticism and humanism—he argues that there was considerable interaction between humanists and universities from the fourteenth century onward. Lines documents humanists teaching at Italian universities as early as the mid-fourteenth century, and he shows that scholastic philosophers were often receptive to a variety of humanist innovations. The relationship between university culture and humanism becomes, in his analysis, more one of collaboration (with occasional disciplinary frictions) than one of mutual incomprehension and hostility.

In our own contribution, we analyze a text only recently rediscovered to explore the variety of factors—methodological and stylistic, yet also institutional and social—that shaped humanists' translations of Aristotle. In 1521, the Venetian humanist Pietro Alcionio (1490s?–1528) published a volume comprising several Latin translations of Aristotle, including ten books from the philosopher's writings about animals. Less than a year later, the prominent Spanish

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project, have been reprinted in one volume in Ashgate's Variorum Collected Studies Series: *Italian Humanism and Medieval Rhetoric* (Aldershot, Hampshire, 2001).

humanist Juan Ginés de Sepúlveda (1490–1573)—who had already labored long on his own rendition of the same materials—wrote a tract enumerating and ridiculing Alcionio’s infelicities and mistakes. The fusillades that Sepúlveda directed at Alcionio highlight the points of controversy, and thus help to orient a comparative analysis of the translations from a less engaged perspective. In addition, we assess the social significance of the rivalry between these humanists as they competed for recognition and for the preferment of a common patron: Cardinal Giulio de’ Medici, the future Pope Clement VII.

In a coda to the volume, Louise Rice tackles an intriguing scholarly mystery: how can it be that in 1602, nearly a quarter-century before the first known European sighting of a marsupial, an animal that looks suspiciously like a kangaroo appears in an engraving by the Italian printmaker Francesco Villamena? In solving this puzzle, Rice touches on New World discoveries, the customs of late sixteenth-century dissertation defenses, and the curious varieties of early modern naturalism; in so doing, she suggests a solution to the mystery. Marrying the performative, lived reality of early modern life to the textual scholarship in which her subjects were engaged, she fittingly closes a volume dedicated to a scholar who has always been open to new evidence, innovative ideas, and fresh readings of old materials.

In dedicating “*In the Footsteps of the Ancients*” to the memory of Paul Oskar Kristeller, Ronald Witt appropriated Boccaccio’s famous assessment of Petrarch’s achievement: “He has opened the road for himself and for those who want to ascend after him.”<sup>5</sup> We, in turn, are indebted to Professor Witt for his own scholarly itinerary, which has been marked not only by fruitful interchange with peers, but also by a remarkable commitment to the growth and progress of succeeding generations of scholars. As Petrarch, as Kristeller, so too has Ronald Witt “opened the road” for those of us who aspire to follow, in turn, in his footsteps. With gratitude, affection, and deep respect, we are honored to present him with this collection.

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<sup>5</sup> Witt, *Footsteps*, vii: “Sibi et post eum ascendere volentibus viam aperuit”; for the English, *ibid.*, ix.

PART ONE

POLITICS AND THE REVIVAL OF ANTIQUITY



## CHAPTER ONE

### HUMANISM IN THE VERNACULAR: THE CASE OF LEONARDO BRUNI

James Hankins

Among the many issues that Ronald G. Witt's work has made central to the study of the Italian Renaissance is the question of humanism's relationship to the vernacular. An aspect of this question that has only recently drawn the attention of scholars concerns the degree to which humanism had ambitions to appeal, and was able to appeal, to an audience beyond Latin-reading professional humanists and their patrons. Humanism is often taken to be (and sometimes dismissed as) an elite movement affecting only persons wealthy enough to enjoy an education in the classics. But recent studies disclose the desire of humanists to influence a broader social spectrum and to cross gender lines by making available the works of classical authors and contemporary humanists in vernacular languages. New research has also highlighted the role of humanism in shaping non-elite culture, particularly through public ritual, public rhetoric, spectacle and visual symbolism, as well as through humanist writing in the vernacular.<sup>1</sup> Since Leonardo Bruni (1370–1444) was the best-selling author of the

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<sup>1</sup> Alison Brown, "Platonism in Fifteenth-Century Florence," in her *The Medici in Florence: The Exercise of Language and Power* (Florence, 1992), 215–45; *eadem*, ed., *Language and Images of Renaissance Italy* (Oxford, 1995); *eadem*, "Demasking Renaissance Republicanism," in *Renaissance Civic Humanism: Reappraisals and Reflections*, ed. James Hankins (Cambridge, 2000), 179–99; Ronald G. Witt, "*In the Footsteps of the Ancients*": *The Origins of Humanism from Lovato to Bruni* (Leiden, 2000); Stephen J. Milner, "Citing the Ringhiera: The Politics of Place and Public Address in Trecento Florence," *Italian Studies*, 55 (2000), 53–82; *idem*, "Communication, Consensus and Conflict: Rhetorical Principles, the *Ars Concionandi* and Social Ordering in Late Medieval Italy," in *The Rhetoric of Cicero in its Medieval and Renaissance Commentary Tradition*, ed. Virginia Cox and J. O. Ward (Leiden, forthcoming); Milner, "Exile, Rhetoric, and the Limits of Civic Republican Discourse," in *At the Margins: Minority Groups in Premodern Italy*, ed. *idem* (Minneapolis, 2005), 162–91; James Hankins, "Lorenzo de' Medici's *De summo bono* and the Popularization of Ficinian Platonism," in *Humanistica. Per Cesare Vasoli*, ed. Fabrizio Meroi and Elisabetta Scapparone (Florence, 2004), 61–69 (with further references).

Quattrocento and a model for humanists throughout Italy, the concentration on Bruni's Latin and vernacular writings should not suffer quite so much from the usual methodological defect of the case study: i.e., the tendency of the single case to stand in for the normal and the typical. If Bruni is not a typical Quattrocento humanist, nobody is.<sup>2</sup> So the first part of this essay will look at Bruni's contributions to vernacular literature and the motivations leading him to write in the vernacular. The second part will discuss the translation of Bruni's Latin writings into the vernacular, a subject that has been much neglected, not just for Bruni, but for the humanist movement in general.

## 1

Scholars who approach the subject of Bruni's relations with vernacular literature from the direction of Italian literature might be surprised to hear that he had any relations with the *volgare* at all. The period of Bruni's life and greatest influence—let us say the century from 1375 to 1475—has been labelled by authorities on Italian literary history as the *secolo senza poesia*, the one century in the history of Italian literature lacking in imaginative writing. For critics of this ilk, the period is a creative hiatus, sandwiched between the golden age of the Three Crowns of Italy on the one hand—Dante, Petrarch, and Boccaccio—and the renaissance of the vernacular in the age of Lorenzo de' Medici on the other. According to this still-common view, it was Bruni and his fellow humanists who were largely responsible for the strange death of Tuscan literature in the intervening period. Their excessive adulation of classical literature absorbed all cultural energies to the detriment of the vernacular. As Letizia Panizza summarizes,

critics interested in the vernacular see the cult of the classics as culturally regressive, elitist, unoriginal and predominantly didactic. . . .

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<sup>2</sup> On Bruni, see my collection *Humanism and Platonism in the Italian Renaissance* (2 vols.; Rome, 2003), I: *Humanism*. I was introduced to Leonardo Bruni in 1977 when Ronald Witt asked me to make a translation of his *Isagogicon moralis disciplinae* for his undergraduate lecture course. This translation was later published as part of Bruni, *The Humanism of Leonardo Bruni: Selected Texts*, ed. and tr. Gordon Griffiths, James Hankins, and David Thompson (Binghamton, 1987).

Poets were replaced by scholars who gave themselves over to imitating a dead literature instead of carrying forwards the newly-founded and vigorous one in their own spoken mother tongue.<sup>3</sup>

Looking at the whole of Bruni's literary production, it cannot be denied that by far the largest part of his scholarly energies went into the great humanist project of reviving Latin literary culture and spreading the knowledge and emulation of the ancient world among the elites of Italian society. And it is true that he sometimes describes his own forays into vernacular literature dismissively, as mere *jeux d'esprit*, relaxations from the more serious tasks of historical writing in Latin and the translation of Greek philosophy and literature. However, it is not true to say that the mature Bruni despised the vernacular. The impression that he did so mostly comes from an early work, the *Dialogi ad Petrum Histrum* (1401/5), written under the influence of his great friend of that period, Niccolò Niccoli. In this work it is clear that Bruni shares with the other young classicists of the Salutati circle an embarrassment at the popular enthusiasm for Dante, Petrarch and Boccaccio. Evidently the great Trecento writers did not come up to the standards of learning and eloquence these young men had imbibed from their classical reading. David Quint and other scholars have argued persuasively that the second book of the *Dialogues* does not represent a genuine repudiation of the high classicism of the first book, as was famously maintained by Hans Baron.<sup>4</sup> Bruni did eventually change his views about the great Florentine writers of the Trecento, but not as a result of the death of Giangaleazzo Visconti in 1402. It was only two decades later, after his long years in papal service, around the time of his break with Niccoli in 1419. In the attack on Niccoli which signals his change of heart, the invective *In nebulonem maledicum* (1424), Bruni issues what is in effect a palinode for his youthful views, including his views on the vernacular writers. Niccoli is criticized sharply for his attacks on the *optimus nobilissimusque poeta* Dante and for his absurd claims that Petrarch and Boccaccio were ignorant of literature.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Letizia Panizza, "The Quattrocento," in *The Cambridge History of Italian Literature*, ed. Peter Brand and Lino Pertile, rev. ed. (Cambridge, 1999), 131–77, at 131.

<sup>4</sup> David Quint, "Humanism and Modernity. A Reconsideration of Bruni's *Dialogues*," *Renaissance Quarterly*, 38 (1985), 432–45.

<sup>5</sup> Bruni, *In nebulonem maledicum*, in *Leonardo Bruni: Opere letterarie e politiche*, ed. Paolo Viti (Turin, 1996), 338–70.

To be sure, Bruni always remained convinced of the superiority of Latin in both prose and verse, and he sees the improvements made by his contemporaries in the art of writing Latin as one of the great achievements of his age. Indeed, for him, the revival of Latin is more or less synonymous with the whole Renaissance of culture going on around him.<sup>6</sup> But since, following Dante, he regarded Latin as an artificial, learned language invented by great writers in antiquity, he believed that bilingualism was the natural and inevitable condition of mankind.<sup>7</sup> This meant that, in his mature period at least, he could recognize the distinct merit of vernacular writing. As he says in his *Life of Dante*, the vernacular had “its own esteem and merit,” “its own perfection and its own sound, and its polished and learned diction.”<sup>8</sup> Dante himself wrote poor Latin prose and verse, but this was the fault of the rude and monkish age in which he wrote; we can still esteem him for his great achievement in the vernacular. Petrarch began the revival of Latin, for which he deserves to be chiefly famous, but he was also the equal of Dante in the *canzone* and the unrivalled master of the sonnet. For Bruni, the vernacular retains its value even in the midst of the Renaissance of Latin literature, especially as a medium for communicating antique values to the large mass of persons who are not educated in *grammatica* and never will be.

Bruni’s convictions about the value of the vernacular were given practical expression, for, beginning in the early 1420s, he began himself to cultivate the vernacular, as the list of works in Appendix A will show. Bruni’s vernacular works fall basically into two groups. The two *canzoni*, the sonnet, the *Novella di Antioco* and the *Lives of Dante and Petrarch* can be seen as efforts to use traditional vernacular literary genres to spread among the Latinless the civic ideals to whose elaboration and propagation Bruni dedicated the last thirty years of his life. By contrast, the *Difesa*, the *Risposta*, the orations for Niccolò Tolentino and for the Guelf Party, as well as the three letters patent to the city of Volterra, Pope Eugene IV and Francesco Sforza respectively, can be seen primarily as vehicles of official

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<sup>6</sup> Bruni, *Vite di Dante e del Petrarca*, in *ibid.*, 537–60, esp. 554–56.

<sup>7</sup> For Bruni’s views on the history of Latin and the *questione della lingua*, see Angelo Mazzocco, *Linguistic Theories in Dante and the Humanists. Studies of Language and Intellectual History in Late Medieval and Early Renaissance Italy* (Leiden, 1993).

<sup>8</sup> Bruni, *Opere letterarie e politiche*, ed. Viti, 550.



Florentine propaganda. They also served as models of diplomatic and ceremonial rhetoric in the vernacular, employing genres cultivated primarily by public men.

Let me begin with the first group. Bruni's civic ideals, laid out most fully in his *History of the Florentine People*, called for the middling classes of men, the Popolo, to participate in government and put its common good ahead of their private interests.<sup>9</sup> The powerful could and should participate as well, but only if they moderated their behavior and accepted that the predominant power in the state lay with the Popolo. The Popolo needed in their turn to accept the guidance of the wise and the good. The passions of the many needed to be guided by reason. So the Popolo should heed the wise and the good, but they should also seek to educate themselves (as far as possible) in history, thus learning civil prudence, and moral philosophy, thus learning moderation. The ancient classics of Greco-Roman antiquity would provide the material for this civic education.

Bruni's implied target in all this is the competing value-system generated by French chivalry. The chivalric ethos was dangerous in cities because it taught powerful men that their private honor was more important than the common good. Their feudal rivalries tore the city apart, as Bruni demonstrated over and over in the *Florentine History*. Chivalry also made a fetish of romantic love, a disordered passion which led to the weakening of families—the building blocks of the state—and other civic discords. As an antidote to the noxious nonsense spread by chivalric literature, Bruni proposed a civic education based on Aristotle's moral philosophy and on the study of history, particularly the republican history of Livy, Bruni's model in his own historical writing. In this he was following or reviving a tradition begun by Brunetto Latini and other intellectuals of the communal period.<sup>10</sup>

If we look at Bruni's vernacular literary works, it is easy to see how they fit into this project of fighting the chivalric with the civic. Bruni had tried to popularize Aristotle's *Ethics* by discarding the difficult medieval version and retranslating the work into a more

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<sup>9</sup> See my essay, "Teaching Civil Prudence in the Historical Writings of Leonardo Bruni," forthcoming in the proceedings of the conference *Ethik—Wissenschaft oder Lebenskunst? Modelle der Normenbegründung von der Antike bis zur Frühen Neuzeit*, Munich, 4–6 November 2004.

<sup>10</sup> Witt, *Footsteps*, esp. 180–210.

accessible literary Latin. He had further popularized the work by composing, around 1424, the *Isagogicon moralis disciplinae*, a Latin dialogue which combined a review of the major ancient schools of philosophy (taken mostly from Cicero's *De finibus*) with a summary of the most important teachings of the *Ethics*. The *Canzone morale* in the vernacular takes this process of popularization one step further by putting the major conclusions of the *Isagogicon* into Italian verse. The message of this frankly didactic poem is that, though each of the major schools of philosophy has something of value to offer, the Peripatetic school has the most useful teachings, as it emphasizes moderation and virtuous activity in the present life.

Bruni's attack on the folly of romantic love is most clearly seen in his *Novella di Antioco*. Bruni composed this novel (based on a story in Plutarch) in the vernacular to be a companion piece to his Latin translation of the *Fabula Tancredi* from Boccaccio's *Decameron* (IV.1).<sup>11</sup> He jokingly says that he is compensating the vernacular for his appropriation of the Tancred tale for Latin literature. In the latter tale, it will be recalled, Boccaccio recounts how the uncontrollable sexual jealousy of Tancred, prince of Salerno, leads him to kill his daughter's lover Guiscardo and to send her his heart in a goblet; the daughter, Sigismonda, adds poison to the cup and drinks it, dying pathetically in the approved Gothic manner. As an antidote to this tale of disordered passion, which he explicitly castigates as a modern "Italian" behavior pattern, Bruni tells the story of Antioco, son of King Seleuco of Syria. (This novella, by the way, became quite famous in the seventeenth century, forming the subject of a play by Corneille, an opera by Alessandro Stradella, and an English novel by "Mr Theobald," a critic of Alexander Pope.)<sup>12</sup>

In Bruni's novella, set like the *Decameron* in a villa outside Florence, the story of Tancred has just been told and has reduced all the women to tears. At this point a man, "whose name we'll not men-

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<sup>11</sup> On Bruni's retelling of the Tancred story from Boccaccio's *Decameron*, see also the essay below by Timothy Kircher.

<sup>12</sup> For the recent bibliography on the *Novella di Antioco*, also known as the *Seleuco*, and Bruni's translation of the *Fabula Tancredi*, see *Favole parabole istorie. Le forme della scrittura novellistica dal medioevo al rinascimento*, Atti del Convegno di Pisa, 26–28 ottobre 1998, ed. Gabriella Albanese, Lucia Battaglia Ricci, and Rossella Bessi (Rome, 2000), esp. the article of M. Martelli, "Il *Seleuco* di Leonardo Bruni fra storia ed elegia," 250–86. Text in *Novella di Leonardo Bruni Aretino*, ed. Giovanni Papanti [*per nozze*] (Livorno, 1870).

tion at present, but he's a man of great learning in Greek and Latin and well-read in ancient history"—obviously Brunì himself—tells the ladies a tale “to put them in a happy and festive mood” . . . “as though to reverse the effects of the first story.”<sup>13</sup> Brunì starts by saying that he has always found the ancient Greeks far in advance of modern Italians when it came to humanity and *gentilezza di cuore*. In Brunì's tale the king's son, Antioco, falls in love with the king's young wife, Stratonica, but conceals his passion out of decency and respect for his father. Under the influence of this unrequited love his health is ruined, and he is about to die when a wise physician learns the real cause. By a clever device, the physician leads King Seleuco to arrange for an amicable divorce and for the remarriage of his wife to his son. For Brunì this is a happy ending, eminently sensible behavior which leads to the prosperous continuance of the monarchy and the provision of grandchildren for the doting King Seleuco (“who afterwards, seeing his little grandchildren, the most certain continuation of his line, lived in the greatest content and good will”).<sup>14</sup> But Brunì expects us also to realize that rational behavior such as this would never be possible for someone immersed in chivalric traditions, where love and personal honor are inextricably intertwined. A man like Tancred will destroy his monarchy and kill his daughter to satisfy a pernicious notion of honor; but Seleuco saves his son and his monarchy by subordinating his private honor to the common good. The ancients thus teach us that love of family and loyalty to the state come before personal sexual honor. And the novel form allows Brunì to communicate this message to persons outside his usual audience, namely gentlewomen.<sup>15</sup>

The *Lives of Dante and Petrarch* can similarly be seen as attempts to use the prestige of Florence's popular culture heroes to teach lessons in citizenship. Brunì rejects Boccaccio's portrait of Dante, “full of love and sighs and burning tears; it is as if,” Brunì says mockingly, “man were born into this world only to find himself in those ten

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*: “il cui nome tacemo al presente, ma egli è uomo di grande studio in greco ed in latino e molto curioso delle antiche storie . . . per ridurli a letizia e a festa . . . quasi per il contrario di quella di prima.”

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*: “susseguentemente vedendo i piccioli nipoti—certissima successione della sua progenie—visse contentissimo e di buonissima volontà.”

<sup>15</sup> Even if one reader focused rather on the novel as documenting the extraordinary power of women and love over the male sex; see Appendix B.

days of love . . . in the *Hundred Tales*.”<sup>16</sup> As is well known, Bruni’s *Life* gives us a civic Dante, a man admirable for his military and political service. He is a statesman, not a courtly lover. His great poetry was the result of learning and study, not infused by divine inspiration as described in Plato’s *Phaedrus*. Petrarch on the other hand is praised for his prudence in *not* taking part in politics, but in choosing a quiet and leisurely life. Petrarch realized, as Dante did not, that one’s fellow citizens are often ungrateful and give exile and disgrace as bitter rewards for public service.<sup>17</sup> This sounds like a contradiction of Bruni’s settled principles, but it really is not: Bruni praises service to the republic, but recognizes that there are times and places where prudent men will elect not to serve. In such cases, they can still serve the common good with their studies, as Cicero did in his exile. And Petrarch’s studies were certainly of tremendous value to the state in that they enabled his contemporaries and descendants to benefit from ancient wisdom, a prerequisite for good government. The message here for the vernacular reader is that the study of classical antiquity, often perceived as useless and elitist by popular culture, is in fact a form of service to the state and an indispensable prerequisite for distinguished writing, whether in Latin or the vernacular.

We can deal more briefly with the other genus of Bruni’s vernacular writings, the works written for ceremonial or diplomatic purposes and intended to serve as models for public rhetoric in the vernacular. These works, too, Bruni uses as occasions to spread his civic gospel. In the case of the oration for Niccolò Tolentino, Florence’s mercenary captain, Bruni actually delivered the speech from the *ringhiera* or speaking platform outside the Palazzo Vecchio to a large public audience on the Feast of San Giovanni Battista, 25 June 1433. This gave him the chance to repeat in the volgare themes from two important Latin works, his *De militia* (1420) and *Oratio in funere Nanni Strozze* (1428). In these works Bruni had rejected the French chivalric model of knighthood—knights errant saving damsels in distress, smiting the paynim, and attempting to seduce their lord’s wife—and

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<sup>16</sup> *The Humanism of Leonardo Bruni*, 85.

<sup>17</sup> The parallel case of Giano della Bella is told in Bruni’s *History of the Florentine People*, ed. and tr. James Hankins (2 vols. to date; Cambridge, Mass., 2001–), I (2001), 387 (Book IV, chap. 44).

had substituted a new ideal of civic knighthood, derived in equal parts from Aristotle and Cicero, in which the civic knight had as his first duty the defense of the state in war, and in peacetime the protection of widows and orphans.<sup>18</sup> In the Tolentino speech Bruni underlines the incomparable dignity of the great military captain, a dignity he merits because of his key role in protecting and enlarging the state. This thesis Bruni illustrates with a clutch of quotations from Cicero, Plutarch, Plato and Aristotle's *Politics*, though what effect these quotations had on his hearers we can hardly imagine. But we do know that references to the classics were common in ceremonial speeches of the time, such as the vernacular speeches given by Stefano Porcari, which show a similar didactic bent.<sup>19</sup>

But it is the *Risposta agli ambasciatori del Re d'Aragona* that gives us the most striking example of Bruni using the vernacular to spread the teachings of Latin humanism. In 1443 ambassadors came to Florence from the new Aragonese king of Naples to request that Florence break its alliance with Francesco Sforza, then a condottiere in the employ of Venice and Florence, and align itself with Alfonso of Aragon instead. This was an important public occasion that took place in the great audience chamber of the Palazzo Vecchio and was undoubtedly attended by a large number of leading citizens as *richiesti* in addition to the Priors and the Colleges. Bruni was called upon to make the reply for the Signori. Bruni gracefully acknowledged the great respect of the Florentine state for King Alfonso and its ardent desire to serve him. But it had made promises to Sforza, and if it were shameful for a private individual to break promises, it was utterly disgraceful and ruinous for a whole people, after solemn deliberation, to go back on its word; therefore the Florentines would respectfully have to decline his request.<sup>20</sup>

Bruni's eloquence on this occasion was much admired by his Florentine audience, but if they had read his *History of the Florentine*

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<sup>18</sup> See James Hankins, "Civic Knighthood in the Early Renaissance: Leonardo Bruni's *De militia*," forthcoming in the proceedings of the conference *The Transformation of the Knight in Renaissance and Early Modern Europe, Copenhagen 23–25 September 1999*, ed. Hannamari Ragn Jensen, Lene Wagge Petersen and Evelyn Welch, Renaissance-studier (Copenhagen).

<sup>19</sup> Bruni's speech to Niccolò da Tolentino is in Bruni's *Opere*, ed. Viti, 817–23.

<sup>20</sup> The *Risposta* is in *ibid.*, 853–61, under the title *Orazione agli ambasciatori del re d'Aragona*.

*People*, they would have found his words strangely familiar. For in Book VII of that work, under the year 1351, Bruni describes a precisely similar situation where the Pisans are called upon by the tyrannical archbishop of Milan, Giovanni Visconti, to break their peace treaty with the Florentines and make war against them in alliance with himself. The Pisan reply is given by Franceschino Gambacurta, a quondam client of the Visconti but a man who, according to Bruni, puts country ahead of private loyalties. Gambacurta makes an argument very similar to that used by Bruni in 1443, citing the same authorities and using almost the same words.<sup>21</sup> Book VII of Bruni's *History* was published by 1438 and formally presented to the Signoria in that year, so some of his audience were probably aware of the sources of Bruni's eloquence in 1443, answering the Aragonese ambassadors. For these members of his audience, his vernacular speech would have been a powerful example of the utility of history for contemporary statesmen and diplomats. As an example of how humanistic studies could provide vernacular orators with prudence and eloquence in key situations, it could hardly be bettered.

The above examples show, I believe, that though the mature Bruni privileged the Latin language and its literature, he was not hostile to the vernacular, and indeed valued it for certain purposes and genres. Not only did it have "its own esteem and merit" in the hands of great writers such as Dante and Petrarch; it also was an important vehicle for spreading the message of civic humanism to parts of the population that might not otherwise hear it. We might add that the statistics assembled in Appendix A show that several of Bruni's *volgare* works were as popular as any of his original works in Latin. The *Lives of Dante and Petrarch*, the Tolentino speech, and the *Novella di Antioco* survive in as many copies and editions as Bruni's most popular Latin works, and the *Difesa*, *Risposta* and the *Canzone morale* are not far behind these in popularity.

## 2

In his recent important book on the origins of humanism, Ronald Witt makes the point that the lively Trecento tradition in Florence

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<sup>21</sup> Bruni, *History of the Florentine People*, II (2004), 346–52 (Book VII, chaps. 71–75).

of making vernacular translations of the classics prepared that city to become the leader of the humanist movement at the end of the fourteenth century.<sup>22</sup> The translations of Cicero, Seneca, Livy, Sallust and Aristotle by men like Brunetto Latini, Giambono da Bona, and Bartolomeo da San Concordio established an interest in and an identification with ancient Roman republicanism among Florentines and provided an alternative to the culture of chivalry and courtly love coming from high medieval France. Witt's observation is a valuable one that explains much about the emergence of civic humanism—what Quentin Skinner has recently taken to describing as “neo-Roman” culture—and indeed about the origins of the broader Renaissance movement.<sup>23</sup> But we should also remember that vernacular classicism does not come to an end when the Latin humanism of Salutati, Bruni and his generation begins to take root in Florence after 1400. As the history of Bruni's own Latin works shows us, Latin humanism develops a secondary audience among the non-Latinate public via vernacular translations. In some cases, and particularly in the case of Bruni's historical writings, humanist writings were as popular or more popular in the vernacular than in the original Latin.

To take the example of the histories, of Bruni's six historical works, only the *Commentaria rerum graecarum*—his epitome of Xenophon's *Memorabilia*—has no sizable footprint in the vernacular. Bruni's *Punic War*, a compilation based on Polybius, was extremely popular in both Latin and the vernacular, mostly because it served to fill the gap in Roman history created by the loss of the second decade of Livy's history. It was translated, extraordinarily, five times in the fifteenth century, and survives in equal numbers of Latin and Italian manuscripts, about 120 in each case. But before 1600 it was printed twelve times in Italian, four times in French and once in German—17 vernacular editions in all, compared with only five Latin editions. The first Latin edition appeared only in 1498, after seven of the Italian editions had already appeared. The *Gothic War*, a compilation based on Procopius, survives in 127 Latin manuscripts, more than four times the number of Italian manuscripts, and was printed

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<sup>22</sup> Witt, *Footsteps*, 453–54.

<sup>23</sup> Quentin Skinner adopts the “neo-Roman” term in place of civic humanism in his *Liberty before Liberalism* (Cambridge, 1998), implicitly throughout chap. 1, but explicitly on 11, n. 31.

in twice as many Latin editions as Italian ones, but it is clearly a well-known text in both languages, and was available in Spanish, French, German and English as well. On the other hand, the historical essay on the origins of Mantua is twice as popular in the vernacular as it is in Latin. The vernacular version of Bruni's memoirs of his own time, the *Rerum suo tempore gestarum liber*, survives in the vernacular in only eight manuscripts (as opposed to 69 manuscripts of the Latin original), but it was printed twice in Italian, as compared with only three imprints of the Latin original. Finally, Bruni's greatest work, his *History of the Florentine People* (1415–42), survives in three times as many Latin manuscripts—sixty—as does the vernacular version by Donato Acciaiuoli (1473), but Acciaiuoli's translation was printed twice during the Quattrocento (1476, 1492), and twice in the sixteenth century, whereas the original Latin was not printed until 1610. So after 1473, the Acciaiuoli translation was clearly the dominant vehicle through which Bruni's masterwork was known during the Renaissance itself.

I have no wish to exaggerate, and it must be pointed out that it is only in the case of Bruni's historical works that his vernacular profile is broadly comparable to his profile in Latin. His Latin dialogues, letters, treatises and orations never become popular in the vernacular, though they circulated very widely in Latin manuscripts. The high *rilevato* of Bruni's historical works in the vernacular suggests, in fact, that something of a conscious effort was afoot to promote them in that medium, and this suspicion is borne out by a variety of evidence. We know, for example, that Bruni himself arranged for the translation of the *Punic Wars*, composed *da un suo caro amico*, possibly Nicola di Vieri de' Medici or his son.<sup>24</sup> Acciaiuoli tells us

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<sup>24</sup> A colophon in Florence, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale (= BNCf), MS. Naz. II.II.69 (a. 1468) has the following note: "Questo libro fu chopiato per me Michele d'Andrea Singnorini dalla propria origine che fece vulgarizare detto messere Lionardo." For this manuscript see my *Repertorium Brunianum: A Critical Guide to the Writings of Leonardo Bruni* (Rome, 1997), no. 824. Numerous other copies, e.g. BNCf, MS. Naz. II.III.257 (= *Repertorium*, no. 838); Florence, Biblioteca Laurenziana MS. Ashb. 543 (= *Repertorium*, no. 645); Laurenziana MS Segni 4 (= *Repertorium*, no. 696) speak of the translation as having been made by "un suo amico". BNCf Magl. XXIII.125 (= *Repertorium*, no. 796) says in the rubric to the translation proper (fol. 1v) that the text was "composto in latino per messer Leonardo d'Arezzo et poi per lui volgarizzato", while on the previous folio the rubricator says "e poi traslatato in volghare a 'stanza d'uno suo amico." Modena, Biblioteca Estense, MS Camp. App. 1375 (= *Repertorium*, no. 1559), also attributes the *volgarizzamento* to Bruni him-



that Bruni would certainly have himself translated his *Florentine Histories* into Italian had he lived longer, and he, Acciaiuoli, was translating them at the express command of the Florentine *Signoria*. It was his duty as a citizen to translate them for they would make known the glorious deeds of Florence and provide an education in civil prudence to his fellow-citizens who lacked a knowledge of Latin.<sup>25</sup> Here again, we see the vernacular being used as a means to spread the teachings of Florentine civic humanism to an audience far wider than the narrow Latin-reading public.

It is obvious, of course, that translating Latin works into Italian did more than simply make them available to the Latinless. It also transformed those works in ways that brought them closer to the lived experience of Renaissance men, largely stripping off the “otherness” of the classical world, at once familiarizing and dehistoricizing the experience of the past. This phenomenon has been widely discussed in studies of vernacular translation of the fourteenth century, so I will not dwell upon it here.<sup>26</sup> It is, however, worth noting that, in the case of Acciaiuoli’s version of the *Florentine Histories*, the process is not so much one of familiarization as of re-familiarization. Bruni’s Latin had transformed and elevated the grubby particularity of Florentine wars and civil unrest, as described by Villani and others, into a classical never-never land of liberty, republican virtue and imperial glory. Acciaiuoli’s translation, though hardly returning to the racy idiom and gossipy style of Villani, still does much to refamiliarize

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self. BNCF MS Magl. XXIII.153, folios unnumbered (= *Repertorium*, no. 799) says the text was “tratto di greco in latino da messer Lionardo d’Arezo e uolgarezzato da llui ouero da un suo disciepolo.” Parma, Biblioteca Palatina, MS Parm. 312, fol. 2r (= *Repertorium*, no. 2078), says the translation is “per uno suo caro amico.” Lisbon, Biblioteca Nacional, MS Iluminados 41, fol. 72r (= *Repertorium*, no. 1184) says the text was translated “per un suo amicho e disciepolo”. Since this is the earliest and most magnificently decorated copy of the translation, it is possible that its scribe, the son of Bruni’s close friend Nicola di Vieri de’Medici, or Nicola di Vieri de’Medici himself, was the author of the translation; the colophon reads: “Scritto per me Charlo di Nichola di messer Veri de Medici nellanno MCCCCXXXIII”. According to Biondo Flavio’s *Italia Illustrata*, Nicola di Vieri de’Medici was a student of Bruni; see *Biondo Flavio: Italy Illustrated*, ed. and tr. Jeffrey A. White (Cambridge, Mass., 2005), 305 (6.28).

<sup>25</sup> Acciaiuoli’s preface is in Florentine edition (Jacobus Rubeus) of 1476, which was reprinted in facsimile under the title *Storie fiorentine—Leonardo Bruni, Poggio Bracciolini*, presentazione di Eugenio Garin (Arezzo, 1984).

<sup>26</sup> See the literature cited by Witt, *Footsteps*, 180–210.

the text for Florentine audiences. Battles are fought by *condottieri* and managed by Florentine *commissari*, not by *praefecti*; Guelfs and Ghibelline parties contend for preeminence, not “the patriotic party” and “the opposing party;” the unspecified “war machines” of the Latin original are translated so as to suggest contemporary military techniques; public offices, taxes and procedures in Florence are given their real names rather than Bruni’s made-up classicizing equivalents. In this respect, too, Acciaiuoli makes the lessons of Latin humanism more comprehensible and more relevant to the ordinary experience of middle-class Florentines.

Whatever the compromises *volgarizzatori* may have made in presenting Latin humanism to a vernacular-reading audience, it is clear that in Florence and elsewhere in Italy the major themes of Bruni’s civic humanism were available to, and even popular among, readers of the Tuscan and other vernaculars.<sup>27</sup> Those themes were transmitted both by Bruni’s own vernacular writings and by vernacular translations of his Latin works. In view of this evidence we need to revisit the assumption often made in the modern secondary literature that humanism was always an affair of elites. Even if its patronage and leadership comes from a small group of wealthy, powerful and well-educated men, it clearly had ambitions to spread its cultural values further down the social pyramid into the middle classes, and across gender lines to women. That those ambitions were not vain is shown by the numerous copyists and printers who spent time and resources making Bruni’s work available in the vernacular. Bruni, of course, is only one author, even if an extremely popular one. I suspect a full account of vernacular humanism in the Quattrocento would disclose a far more popular movement than we have hitherto imagined.

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<sup>27</sup> Among the Italian translations of the *De bello punico* is one in Milanese, another in Neapolitan dialect. The treatise *De origine Mantuae* was translated into a northern Italian dialect.

APPENDIX A  
LEONARDO BRUNI IN THE VERNACULAR

1. *Works originally written in the vernacular*

	MSS.	EDNS.
<i>Canzone a laude di Venere, secondo l'opinione di Platone</i> (1424?)	23	
<i>Canzone morale, De felicitate</i> (ca. 1424?)	44	
<i>Difesa del popolo di Firenze nella impresa di Lucca</i> (1431)	64	
<i>Epistola mandata a Papa Eugenio IV</i> (1435)	2	
<i>Lettera al popolo di Volterra</i> (1431)	23	
<i>Lettera allo illustrissimo conte Francesco Sforza</i> (1439)	13	
<i>Novella di Antioco, re di Siria</i> (1437)	62	2
<i>Orazione detta a Nicolo da Tolentino</i> (1433)	101	
<i>Orazione fatta pe' chapitani della Parte Guelfa visitando i Signori</i>	8	
<i>Orazione fatta pe' chapitani della Parte Guelfa visitando il papa</i>	9	
<i>Risposta agli ambasciatori del re di Raona</i> (1443)	47	
<i>Sonetto "Spento veggio merze sopra la terra"</i>	22	
<i>Vite di Dante e del Petrarca</i> (1436)	156	6

The list excludes public correspondence written by Bruni or under his authority as chancellor; diplomatic reports; and other public documents of Bruni's chancellorship.

The existence of at least five *dicerie* and several Italian poems are attested, but these works are now lost. There is also a large number of *dubia* and *spuria*, including a volgare translation of Cicero's *Pro Marcello*, now attributed to an *anonimo quattrocentesco*. The statistics on editions cover only editions printed before 1600.

2. *Latin works translated into vernacular languages*

Original works by Bruni are listed first, followed by his Latin translations from the Greek. The translations are all fifteenth-century unless otherwise noted.

INTO ITALIAN	MSS.	EDNS.
<i>Cicero Novus</i>	6	
<i>Commentaria rerum graecarum</i> (2 versions)	2	
<i>De primo bello punico</i> (5 versions)	120	12
<i>De bello gothico</i> (2 versions)	30	5
<i>De temporibus suis</i> (2 versions)	8	2
<i>De origine Mantuae</i>	43	
<i>Historiarum Florentini populi libri XII</i>	19	4
<i>Laudatio Florentinae urbis</i>	1	
<i>Oratio coram Alphonso Aragonum rege</i>	13	
Six letters	11	
Aeschines, <i>Epistola ad Athenienses</i>	1	
Aristotle, <i>Ethica Nicomachea</i> (2 versions)	10	
St. Basil, <i>Ad Adolescentes</i> (2 versions)	1	
Plato, <i>Epistulae</i> (partial version)	1	
Plutarch, various lives	4	2
Xenophon, <i>Tyrannus</i> (attested but lost)	—	

There also survive *volgarizzamenti* of two public letters for Florence (18 MSS) and a papal bull (3 MSS), all originally composed by Brunetti in Latin

INTO SPANISH		
<i>Novella di Antioco</i>	1	
Five letters	2	
<i>De bello gothico</i>	6	
<i>De primo bello punico</i> (2 versions)	3	
<i>De militia</i> (2 versions)		
<i>Isagogicon moralis disciplinae</i>	1	1
<i>Oratio in hypocritas</i>		1
<i>Vita Aristotelis</i>		1
<i>Vite di Dante e del Petrarca</i>	1	
Aristotle, <i>Economica</i> (2 versions)	4	
Aristotle, <i>Ethics</i>	5	1
St. Basil, <i>Epistola ad adolescentes</i>	1	
Homer, <i>Orationes ex Iliade</i>	2	
Plato, <i>Phaedo</i>	4	
Xenophon, <i>Tyrannus</i> (based on the lost Italian version)	1	

INTO FRENCH	MSS.	EDNS.
<i>Cicero Novus</i>	2	
Speeches from the <i>Historiae Florentini populi</i> (s. XVI)		1
<i>De bello gothico</i>	4	
<i>De primo bello punico</i>	27	4
Aristotle, <i>Economica</i>		1
Boccaccio, <i>Fabula Tancredi</i>		3
Plato, <i>Phaedo</i>		1
Plutarch, <i>Vita Demosthenis</i>	1	
Xenophon, <i>Tyrannus</i>	1	

INTO GERMAN		
<i>Cicero Novus</i> (s. XVI)		3
<i>De bello gothico</i> (s. XVI)		1
<i>De primo bello punico</i> (s. XVI)		1
<i>Isagogicon moralis disciplinae</i>	1	
Aristotle, <i>Economica</i>	1	
<i>Fabula Tancredi ex Bocatio</i> (tr. from Bruni's Latin version)		3
Xenophon, <i>Tyrannus</i>	1	

INTO ENGLISH		
<i>De bello gothico</i> (s. XVI)	1	1

SOURCE: James Hankins, *Repertorium Brunianum: A Critical Guide to the Writings of Leonardo Bruni* (1 vol. to date; Rome, 1997–), I: *Handlist of Manuscripts*. [Two more volumes are in preparation; vol. 3 contains the catalogue of vernacular translations.]

## APPENDIX B

An anonymous reader's note (s. XV) on Bruni's *Novella di Antioco*, entitled *Conclusione sopra la potenza delle donne*.

SOURCE: Florence, Biblioteca Riccardiana, MS Ricc. 2254, fol. 136r-v.

Mirabil cosa me senpre paruto, et esser parrebbe credo a'cciaschuno che coll'animo riposato raguardaxe, quanto e quale sia la potentia che le onestixime donne àno negli huomini. Considerando che t[r]anta uirtu e scientia, quanta fu in Aristotile, Virgilio o Dante et altri assai elegantissimi e superlativi filosafi e poeti auexe amplissimo luogo questo atto d'amore femminile, et non solamente nei giouani anni ma ne maturi o ue[s]tusti. Il quale atto d'amore, benche naturale, comune e quasi necexario sia, niente di meno non che comendare, ma schusar non si puo degniamente. Ma chi sara intra noi mortali giusto giudice a'cchondannare o chorreggiere chi in parte da'ccio fusse compreso? Veramente non sia ego – o poca fermeza, o bestiale appetito et desiderio degli huomini! Che cosa non possono in noi le donne se elle uogliono, che eziandio non uogliendo e non isforzando si poxono assai e gran cose, come tutto giornno per esperie<n>tia si uede, et massimamente se àno dote da natura di bellezza, vageza e altre cose assai continuamente per loro ne chuori degli huomini prochuranti.

Et che questo sia uero, lasciamo stare quello che Gioue per Europe o Erchule per Iole o Paris per Elena facessino, percioche cose poetiche sono. Molti di poco sennele ex timore bbon fauole. Ma mostrisi per le cose conueneuoli ad alchuno dinegate. Era ancor nel mondo piu che una femina quando il nostro primo padre, lasciato il comandamento statogli fatto dalla propria bocca di Dio, s'acchosto alle propie persuasioni de lei? Certo no. E Dauit, non obstante che molte n'auesse, solamente ueduta Bersabe, per'lei dimentico Iddio, il suo regnio che si decreder che gli auese fatto se ella alchuna cosa auesse adomandato. Et Salamone al'chui senno niuno aggiunse mai dal figliuolo di Dio in fuori non abbandono colui che sauio la uera fatto et per piacere a una femina inginocchio e adoro Balaim. Che diro degli egregii e famosi e eruditissimi dottori che di tanti e si eccellentissimi philosafi, che degli admirabili et infiniti oratori huomin quasi diuini, sì di filicita d'ingiegnio et excellentia di dotrina, sì della elegantia e facundia, sì di grauissime sententie abbondantiximi, che questo incredibile uigore d'amore abbi auto i'llor' forza?

Che fe' crede che molti altri dani una altra cosa tirati che dall'amore et piacer loro faccendo adunque conclusioni, perche piu in dir discendermi non poxo che piu carte ordite\* non ci sono, credo certissimamente per tua discretione et humanita diletissimo bono t'achosterai meco et insieme diremo era tanti et tali sublimissimi philosafi excellentissimi poeti et acutissim<i> dottori prenominati non achusato ma schusato anplissimamente puo passare. Il nome del giovinetto Antioco, essendo come si uede tenere e giouinetto, stato crudelmente percoxe dalle aureate et acutissime di Chupido sagitte. Il quale non solamente contra i benigni e gentilissimi spiriti come fu quello d'Antioco a potentia e valore, ma etiandio contra i marmorei obstinati et lapidei. *Et sic est finis.*

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\* This is the last page of the MS.





## CHAPTER TWO

### HEROIC INSUBORDINATION IN THE ARMY OF SIGISMONDO MALATESTA: PETRUS PARLEO'S *PRO MILITE*, MACHIAVELLI, AND THE USES OF CICERO AND LIVY\*

Anthony F. D'Elia

Ronald G. Witt recently argued that the imitation of Cicero's Latin writing style was the means by which traditional communal values were disseminated among elites:

Learning to imitate Ciceronian style through the medium of Cicero's writings, the student, whether residing in a republic or lordship, submitted to an indoctrination in civic values. . . . No longer merely disembodied ideas, learned aphoristically from traditional school texts, they were now part of patterns of thought absorbed through intense training in adolescence and anchored in the illusion that Ciceronian language was an incantation for reviving the ancient Roman spirit in contemporary youth.<sup>1</sup>

Following Witt's ideas, this article exemplifies how the imitation of the style and contents of classical texts could create a republican discourse of civic values even within a dictatorship, the Rimini of Sigismondo Malatesta.

The little-studied Riminese humanist, Pietro Parleone (Parleo) composed an oration on behalf of a captain who had committed a capital offense by disobeying a direct order from Sigismondo Malatesta.<sup>2</sup>

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\* I first met Ron Witt in Rome in June of 1990. That summer, Ron (along with Ken Gouwens) convinced me that my future lay not in Classics but in the Italian Renaissance. They were right. Thank you, Ron!

<sup>1</sup> Ronald G. Witt, *"In the Footsteps of the Ancients": The Origins of Humanism from Lovato to Bruni* (Leiden, 2000), 493.

<sup>2</sup> Pietro Perleone (Parleo) studied under Filelfo, then worked in his native Rimini as court historiographer for Sigismondo Malatesta, and later taught rhetoric and classical literature at the San Marco school in Venice from 1457 to 1463. On him, see Margaret L. King, *Venetian Humanism in an Age of Patrician Dominance* (Princeton, 1986), 416–17. Carlo Tonini dates the oration in his *La cultura letteraria e scientifica in Rimini dal secolo XIV ai primordi del XIX* (2 vols.; Rimini, 1884), I, 180.

Although probably a rhetorical exercise, this work, like the texts that Ronald Witt has analyzed, expresses political ideas inherent in its republican form and sources. In this Ciceronian oration, Parleo draws predominantly on examples in Livy to justify the soldier's action and to argue that the authority of the state and tradition are superior to a dictator's commands. The classical values of honor, patriotism, and service to the state, which, as Witt contends, were "enshrined" in Cicero's writings, are also exemplified in Parleo's main source, the ancient historian Livy. More than 60 years later, Machiavelli interpreted many of the same passages from Livy that Parleo employs for a different purpose. Studying Parleo's oration in relation to other Riminese humanist works and to Machiavelli's later writings illuminates how the imitation and appropriation of ancient texts carried political meaning.

Although Parleo's oration may have been a set piece, the battle that it describes was a violent contemporary reality. The captain's offense supposedly took place during a campaign in 1453, when Florence hired Sigismondo Malatesta to retake the fortified city of Vada in Tuscany, which King Alfonso of Aragon had occupied. Sigismondo had earlier been in the employ of Alfonso to fight against Francesco Sforza, Florence, and Urbino, but in 1447 the Florentines persuaded Sigismondo to switch sides. Alfonso had delayed and then only paid a fraction of the money owed to Sigismondo, and the Florentines offered a much better deal. Sigismondo refused to return the advance he had received of 32,400 ducats to the rejected and bitter Alfonso. Meanwhile, the Aragonese navy was bearing down on the city of Piombino on the Mediterranean coast and successfully fighting off the Florentine reinforcements.<sup>3</sup> Rinaldo Orsini had just made himself lord of the city and was barely holding out against Alfonso's Spanish troops. Now in Florentine employ, Sigismondo immediately marched the Florentine army against the besieging Aragonese, pinning them against the city's wall and slaughtering them. Over a thousand died in the ferocious battle.<sup>4</sup> The fact that a dictator, Sigismondo, was employed to fight on behalf of Florence,

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<sup>3</sup> Alan Ryder, *The Kingdom of Naples under Alfonso the Magnanimous: The Making of a Modern State* (Oxford, 1976), 262; *Ibid.*, 302, provides an eyewitness account of a naval battle for Piombino on 19 July 1448.

<sup>4</sup> Michael Mallett, *Mercenaries and Their Masters: Warfare in Renaissance Italy* (London, 1974), 196.

which prided itself on being and consistently portrayed itself as a republic, exemplifies the apparent contradictions endemic in republican and signorial relations in fifteenth-century Italy.

These events were immediately fashioned into a classical form and language. In his epic poem in 13 books about Sigismondo Malatesta, the *Hesperis*, completed in 1455, the Riminese court poet Basinio Basini immortalized the historical events from 1448 to 1453.<sup>5</sup> In this poem, Sigismondo represents all of Italy against the foreign invaders, the Spanish Aragonese. The disloyal mercenary is cast as a divinely inspired hero. The defense of Piombino and the siege of Vada are recounted in epic style as if they were modern Troys. All the gods of Mt. Olympus actively guide the battles. Jupiter's will is revealed to Sigismondo in a dream. Like Homer and Virgil, his models, Basinio even dedicates three books to Sigismondo's travels in the underworld (Books VII–IX).<sup>6</sup> If Mars hinders Sigismondo and throws him down from the walls of Vada, Venus heals his wounds and encourages his attacks. Classical values permeate the Latin language of Basinio's epic, which is a prime example of how the imitation of classical models shaped the way humanists read and presented their contemporary events. A speech by Alfonso's general, for example, to the enemy on the walls of Vada comes right out of Homer and is reminiscent of Achilles' address to Hector below the walls of Troy in Book XXII of the *Iliad*:

You men who have come from Tarcone into Italy, fight; why do you stand above in high towers and not do battle? . . . The Italians have decided to give you in pieces to wild dogs and as bloody bait to filthy birds; to scatter you all over the great sea to be devoured by sharks (*piscibus incurvis*). Defend your walls, Celts, with this expectation; by this omen, barbarian horde, fight for a long time with the great Latins.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>5</sup> A. Campana, "Basinio da Parma," *DBI*, 7 (1965), 89–98; Basinio da Parma, *Hesperidos*, in *Basinii Parmensis Poetae opera praestantiora* (Rimini, 1794). On the *Hesperis*, see Vladimiro Zabughin, *Vergilio nel Rinascimento Italiano da Dante a Torquato Tasso*, ed. Stefano Carrai and Alberto Cavarzere (2 vols.; Trent, 2000), I, 287–93; Antonio Belloni, *Storia dei generi letterari italiani: il poema epico e mitologico* (Milan, 1912), 92–100.

<sup>6</sup> Basinio studied the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* in Greek under Theodore Gaza, as noted in Belloni, *Storia dei generi*, 93; and Campana, "Basinio," 89.

<sup>7</sup> Basinio, *Hesperidos*, XII, lines 532–54: "Taracone profecti/Italiam pugnate viri; quid turribus altis/adstantes, bello totas non funditis iras?/. . ./Vos canibus dare frustra feris, avibusque cruentas/obscoenis escas; magno vos spargere ponto/incurvis pelagi laniandos piscibus omnes/decernunt Itali. Vos hac defendite vestra/moenia spe, Celtae; vos hoc, o barbara turba,/omine jam dudum magnis certate Latinis."

The reference to wild dogs and birds and other Homeric formulae recur as often in the *Hesperis* as in the *Iliad*. While such a strictly classical form was meant to lend permanence and grandeur to contemporary events, one may wonder if contemporaries found such locutions deflating or comical rather than ennobling.

Piombino was one of the great battles of the fifteenth century. Basinio dedicated an entire book (II) to this battle and his rendering of the events emphasizes their epic violence:

Some of them set about stealthily climbing the hidden entrances and walls, while others threw their lives into open dangers, and others filled the ditches with sudden death. The arrows and arms of Apollo's bow resounded to some; bullets roared with melted lead to others. But the pitiful Lydians [Florentines] stood in front of their high towers and kept the mad Celts [Aragonese] at bay with missiles and set about pushing the aggressive enemy down from their walls, and on the right side rolled huge rocks from on high.<sup>8</sup>

The Spanish (Aragonese) set up ramparts and bombarded the city with arrows and cannon balls. They also sent numerous soldiers against the fortress, but their losses were too great. They were forced to abandon the siege of Piombino and return to Naples. Modern historians, following other non-literary primary sources, have corroborated the catastrophic violence of Basinio's epic.<sup>9</sup> In contrast, Machiavelli's discussion of the siege of Piombino lacks violence and heroism.<sup>10</sup> He says that the Florentines suffered from lack of supplies, especially wine and potable water. They loaded four galleys with supplies but Alfonso sent seven against them, destroying two and chasing away two. In desperation, over 200 Florentine soldiers deserted and joined the Aragonese. If it were not for the stubborn Neri Capponi, Machiavelli contends, Florence would have agreed to surrender Piombino and pay Alfonso a ransom. In the end, Alfonso retreated with his superior troops, not because of Sigismondo's prowess,

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<sup>8</sup> Basinio, *Hesperidos*, II, lines 91–99: “Pars aditus coecos et moenia scandere furim,/pars in aperta parant animas jactarepericla,/atque alii subita fossas implere ruina./Illis tela sonant, arcus, et Apollinis arma;/his glandes referunt liquefacto murmura plumbo./At Lydi celsis miseri pro turribus adstant,/missilibusque procul Celtas arcere furentes,/infensumque parant detrudere moenibus hostem,/saxaque praecipiti devolvunt grandia dextra.”

<sup>9</sup> Ryder, *Kingdom of Naples*, 302; Mallett, *Mercenaries*, 196; P. J. Jones, *The Malatesta of Rimini and the Papal State: A Political History* (Cambridge, 1974), 200.

<sup>10</sup> Niccolò Machiavelli, *Florentine Histories*, VI.16.

but because his army was devastated by swamp diseases. Machiavelli's history of the battle accords with his infamous criticism of Italian warfare and the mercenary system as bloodless battles and pageantry. In describing the famous battle of Zagonara, for example, Machiavelli says that only three men died after falling from their horses and suffocating in the mud. Similarly, in describing the battle of Anghiari, which, he claims, lasted only four hours, Machiavelli writes that only one man died after he fell from his horse and was trampled.<sup>11</sup> Other sources claim losses of 3,200 horse for the Florentines at Zagonara and 900 men on both sides at Anghiari.<sup>12</sup> Machiavelli was concerned with deflating the notions of epic confrontations and classical god-like heroism that Basinio and other humanists had so successfully crafted. Indeed, after the siege of Piombino Sigismondo was proclaimed the savior of Tuscany.

Alfonso did not forget this defeat and six years later sent his illegitimate son Ferdinand into Tuscany to harass once again the Florentines.<sup>13</sup> In 1453 Federico da Montefeltro led 12,000 Aragonese soldiers under Ferdinand's command into Tuscany. They took Foiano and encamped in Chianti; from here they raided Florentine territory, causing much havoc and coming within six miles of Florence. "So formidable were these armies and so dangerous those wars," Machiavelli writes, "that towns that today are abandoned as places impossible to defend were then defended as places impossible to take."<sup>14</sup> Machiavelli's comments should be taken especially seriously given his general disparaging opinion of Italian warfare. Among other towns, the Aragonese had taken control of the strategic, previously impregnable fortified city of Vada.<sup>15</sup> The shocked Florentines hired Astorre Manfredi and Sigismondo Malatesta to lead their army of 8,000 soldiers against the Aragonese and defend Tuscany.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, IV.6; V.33.

<sup>12</sup> Niccolò Machiavelli, *Florentine Histories*, tr. Laura F. Banfield and Harvey C. Mansfield, Jr. (Princeton, 1988), 151, n. 4; Mallet, 197.

<sup>13</sup> For this paragraph, see Machiavelli, *Florentine Histories*, VI.28. For archival documentation on this campaign, see Luigi Rossi, "I prodromi della guerra in Italia del 1452-53: I tiranni di Romagna e Federico da Montefeltro," *Atti e Memorie della r. deputazione di storia patria per le provincie delle Marche*, ser. 2 ("Nuova Serie"), 3 (1906), 63-101, 103-24, 189-224, 279-305.

<sup>14</sup> *Florentine Histories*, VI.28; translation in Machiavelli, *Florentine Histories*, tr. Banfield and Mansfield, 262.

<sup>15</sup> Jones, *Malatesta of Rimini*, 209.

By the 1450s the most sought-after *condottiere* was Federico da Montefeltro, whose reputation for caution and fidelity to his employers made him more attractive than Sigismondo, who was regarded as the better soldier.<sup>16</sup> Federico had led the Florentines before and would lead them again, but now he was employed by the Aragoneses. The Malatesta had a long-standing friendship with Florence and the Medici; Sigismondo had saved Tuscany at Piombino and a military genius was needed for the recapture of Vada. On 30 September 1453, the Florentine ambassadors Giannozzo Manetti and Bernardo de' Medici met Sigismondo in the field below Vada to hand over formal control of the Florentine army.<sup>17</sup>

Manetti delivered a speech, which has survived, on behalf of the Florentine commune.<sup>18</sup> Although the purpose of the oration was formally to hire Sigismondo as military commander of Florence and its troops against the Aragoneses' incursions, Manetti also praises the Malatesta family and their numerous alliances over the years with Florence, discusses the nobility of the military arts, and argues that every city should have a *milizìa* for its own protection. Manetti draws extensively on Leonardo Bruni's popular treatise, *De militia* (1422), for his discussion of *milizìa*, Roman triumphal crowns, and ancient political ideas from Aristotle and Cicero.<sup>19</sup> If we follow C. C. Bayley's reading of Bruni's *De militia* as an attack on the mercenary system, Manetti's use of Bruni's treatise in an oration to hire a mercenary captain seems contradictory. But, as Gordon Griffiths maintains, while Bruni advocates ancient Rome as a model for military organization, he does not condemn the dominant mercenary system in fifteenth-century Italy.<sup>20</sup> Furthermore, Florence still had its own army; only

<sup>16</sup> Mallett, *Mercenaries*, 104.

<sup>17</sup> The oration is published in Vespasiano da Bisticci, *Commentario della vita di Messer Giannozzo Manetti*, ed. [P. Fanfani] (Turin, 1882), 203–28. For the details about this brief campaign, see Carlo Tonini, *Compendio della storia di Rimini* (2 vols.; Bologna–Forni: 1895–96), I, 534–35; Jones, *Malatesta of Rimini*, 209.

<sup>18</sup> Poggio Bracciolini, "Historiae Florentinae, libri octo," in *Rerum Italicarum Scriptores*, ed. L. A. Muratori (25 vols.; Leiden, 1723–), XX (1731): 157–436, at 429: "A Florentinis interea creatis Decemviris, equites, ac pedites ad sex millia scribuntur, in quibus Astorgius Manfredus, Sigismundus Malatesta, varique insuper equitum nobiles ductores accepto stipendio auxilio venire."

<sup>19</sup> da Bisticci, *Commentario*, 204–13.

<sup>20</sup> C. C. Bayley, *War and Society in Renaissance Florence: The De Militia of Leonardo Bruni* (Toronto, 1961), 227; Gordon Griffiths, James Hankins, and David Thompson (eds.), *The Humanism of Leonardo Bruni: Selected Texts* (Binghamton, 1987), 110. Apparent

now, Sigismondo, as an experienced commander, has been put in charge. Unlike other Renaissance military treatises, Manetti's discourse was in an oration.<sup>21</sup> It demonstrates that classically inspired rhetoric was so bound with contemporary events that it was literally on the battlefield, used to excite soldiers for battle.

In his life of Manetti, Vespasiano da Bisticci says that Manetti delivered the oration in the vernacular so that the entire army could understand it. He writes that the oration was "thought so worthy that no more could possibly be said about military science."<sup>22</sup> Vespasiano apparently thought that the encomiastic oration was an appropriate genre for military theory. By contrast, the humanist Naldo Naldi concentrates on Manetti's rhetorical form and delivery:

the entire city [Florence] commanded Giannozzo [Manetti] to appoint Sigismondo general and give him the baton, by which he would command all the soldiers in the army. In performing this duty Giannozzo delivered a most beautiful oration in the open field by the Castle of Vada; everyone in the army attentively listened and were so stupefied by the elegance and dignity of his oration, that he obtained the highest praise and glory for it.<sup>23</sup>

Naldo makes it clear later in his account that it was because of Manetti's speech that the Florentine army under Sigismondo triumphed. Even in a vernacular oration given on a battlefield, style, beauty, and elegance were deemed to be so essential for persuasion

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contradictions in humanist texts are often deliberate rhetorical devices, as demonstrated by Marcia L. Colish, "Machiavelli's Art of War: A Reconsideration," *Renaissance Quarterly*, 51 (1998), 1151–68.

<sup>21</sup> For other fifteenth-century humanist discussions of military practice, see Robert Black, "Ancients and Moderns in the Renaissance: Rhetoric and History in Accolti's *Dialogue on the Preeminence of Men of his own Time*," *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 43 (1982), 3–32, at 18–19; and Giuliana Crevatin, "La 'Virtus' del condottiero tra retorica e romanzo," in *Federico di Montefeltro: lo stato, le arti, la cultura*, ed. Giorgio Carboni Baiardi, Giorgio Chittolini, and Piero Floriani (Rome, 1986), 417–39.

<sup>22</sup> da Bisticci, *Commentario*, 86.

<sup>23</sup> Naldo Naldi, "In vitam Jannotii Manetti," in *Rerum Italicarum Scriptores*, ed. Muratori, XX (1731), 530–608, at 591: "Quum autem Malatestae Sigismundo sceptrum tamquam duci primo dandum esset, atque exercitus omnis curae unius ducis subiiciendus esse videretur, mandatum est Jannotio ab universa Civitate, ut munus obiret constituendi ducis sceptrique tribuendi, quo esset ille cunctis in exercitu militibus imperaturus. In quo munere Iannotius obeundo pulcherrimam in patenti campo e regione Arcis Vadae habuit orationem, omnibus qui essent in exercitu attente audientibus atque ita propter elegantiam et gravitatem orationis in stuporem conversis ut summam inde laudem atque gloriam consequeretur."

that for Naldo they rendered superfluous any consideration of the oration's content.

Sigismondo's main charge was to retake the castle of Vada, which had fallen to the Aragonese in 1453. As the Castle was surrounded by swamp and marsh, Sigismondo and the Florentine forces could not effectively use artillery. The castle was also strategically placed on the Mediterranean coast, so the enemy had a constant flow of fresh troops and supplies. These problems seemed insurmountable and many of the captains were disheartened until Sigismondo eventually devised a way to mount his canon and cut the castle off from the sea.<sup>24</sup> These events occupy the last three books of Basinio's *Hesperis*:

Tritonia gave Sigismondo the following idea: he shook the hard walls with terrifying stones and from a high side cut the approach off from rafts. His bronze war machine thundered from the ground and flung rocks; it beat the air with crashing movement, and pounded the walls with a tumbling boulder, and his catapult hurled huge mill-stones. . . .<sup>25</sup>

Here and elsewhere, Basinio uses classical words to describe canons, which had just begun to transform warfare.<sup>26</sup> Like Cicero and Caesar, he uses *ballista* for a catapult, and, like Livy, Frontinus, Tacitus, and Sallust employs *machina* for a warlike engine.<sup>27</sup> These machines, as the ancient military theorist Vegetius notes, were especially useful for fomenting panic and terror in the besieged.<sup>28</sup> In

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<sup>24</sup> Tonini, *Compendio*, 534–35; Cesare Clementini, *Raccolto storico della fondazione di Rimini e dell'originee vite de' Malatesti* (Rimini, 1617), 381–82.

<sup>25</sup> Basinio, *Hesperidos*, XII, lines 514–20: "Hanc quoque Sismundo misit Tritonia mentem,/ardua terrificis quassaret moenia saxis,/Atque aditum ratibus lato prohiberet ab alto./A tellure tonat projectis aerea saxis/machina, multifrago quae verberat aethera cursu,/pulsat et ante sonum revoluto moenia saxo/propter aquam vastos librat ballista molares."

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, II, lines 361–78, 461–64. This is also noted by Zabughin, *Vergilio nel Rinascimento Italiano*, I, 293, 323. John Hawkwood was the first to use artillery on the battlefield in Italy in 1387, as noted in Mallett, *Mercenaries*, 160.

<sup>27</sup> See Charlton T. Lewis and Charles Short, *A New Latin Dictionary* (New York, 1879), *ad vocem*; C. S. Kraus and A. J. Woodman, *Latin Historians* (Oxford, 1997), 68.

<sup>28</sup> Vegetius, *Epitoma rei militaris*, IV.12–30. Vegetius (5th Cent. AD) was extremely popular in the Renaissance. In addition to vernacular translations, more than 70 fourteenth and fifteenth-century manuscripts survive, as noted in Josette A. Wisman, "Flavius Renatus Vegetius," *Catalogus Translationum et Commentariorum: Mediaeval and Renaissance Latin Translations and Commentaries*, ed. F. Edward Cranz, Virginia Brown, and Paul Oskar Kristeller (8 vols. to date; Washington, 1960–), VI (1986), 177.



Basinio's epic, Sigismondo is the new Achilles, who seems to do battle (and cast giant stones) by himself, unaided by Florentine or Riminese troops.

Cut off from reinforcements and supplies from the sea, the Aragonese were now stranded inside the fortress. Instead of starving out the occupants, as was normal practice in Renaissance warfare, Sigismondo built a wooden rampart and stormed the isolated fortress:<sup>29</sup>

After they saw the proud peoples of Italy oppressing their wall with such a great rampart they prepared darts and torches against them and struck the Ausonians [Florentines] with constant missiles; the camps fell into confusion in the great tumult and many went down to the Stygian shades; some breathed their last sweet breaths and many fell before the sound of the battle horns; arrow-shafts and poison spears hit them. No battles had been waged like this for many years . . . Three times the most brave son of Pandolphus mounted the high walls above the maple beams of the rampart he built and battled the alarmed enemy.<sup>30</sup>

Even with Mars' help the Aragonese could not fight Sigismondo's onslaught. The following day Sigismondo set fire to their ships in the harbor and the Aragonese were forced to take flight in total defeat (XIII, lines 191–240). Unlike the Piombino battle, there are few details about the siege of Vada, apart from the laudatory accounts of Basinio and Riminese historians.<sup>31</sup> Machiavelli only refers to brief skirmishes, and the modern historian P. J. Jones ascribes Sigismondo's success to "the laziness and improvidence of the enemy."<sup>32</sup> Sigismondo nevertheless was at the forefront of fifteenth-century innovations in military engineering, which included elaborate field fortifications.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> Starvation was a standard siege method, as discussed in Machiavelli, *Art of War*, VII.157, who draws on Vegetius, III.26.

<sup>30</sup> Basinio, *Hesperidos*, XII, lines 607–20: "Qui postquam tanta viderunt mole superbos/Italiae populos subjecto incumbere muro,/tela facesque parant contra jaculisque lacessunt/Ausonios crebris; magno tum castra tumultu/miscentur, multi stygias mittuntur ad umbras;/exspirant dulces animas pars atque tubarum/ante cadunt multi sonitum, quos haurit arundo/missilis armatumque volans hostile veneno./Hic vero, ceu nulla prius sint gesta tot annis/Praelia, . . ./Ter Pandulphiades muros fortissimus altos,/aggere constructo trabibus sublimis acernis/exsuperans armis trepidanti adparuit hosti."

<sup>31</sup> Compare with Filelfo's description of the siege of Piacenza in book three of the *Sforziad*, as discussed in Diana Robin, *Filelfo in Milan: Writings, 1451–1477* (Princeton, 1991), 63–81.

<sup>32</sup> Jones, *Malatesta of Rimini*, 209; Machiavelli, *Florentine Histories*, VI.28.

<sup>33</sup> Mallett, *Mercenaries*, 172.

In Basinio's account, Sigismondo combines the ingenuity of Odysseus with the courage of Achilles to conquer a ferocious foreign enemy in an epic battle that left thousands dead.

Basinio did mention one other hero in the battle against the Aragonese, Sigismondo's beloved captain, Antonio da Narni, who died under the walls of Vada. As the Malatesta and Florentine forces were dodging arrows beneath the walls of Vada:

Pelias seized a concave iron reed and with a sulfuric flame fired a leaden ball at him. Like a thunderbolt, the bullet fell through the air and split the fragile breeze. The unlucky man had hardly seen the sulfuric balls and the shadows of the dust [when] he caught the bullet in his chest; he fell over and black darkness covered his eyes, paleness discolored his bluish cheeks and his once purple nails, and the heat itself left his body. . . . Sigismondo especially cried . . . sighing: These were not my orders, oh Narnius, and I would never give you such commands; do not fight without me. . . . You fall on behalf of your occupied land, and rejoice to sleep in beautiful death. The leaders of the Celts and the barbarian enemy will not go unpunished, Narnius.<sup>34</sup>

In Basinio's rendering of the soliloquy, Sigismondo thus chastises Narni for disobeying him and fighting without him. Here courageous disobedience in the service of the state leads to a hero's death, one which the compassionate ruler must avenge, according to the laws of ancient honor. This is how heroic disobedience is portrayed in Basinio's epic. The contrast to the way in which a similar scenario is treated in Parleo's oration could not be greater.

It was supposedly in this campaign of 1453 that a captain in Sigismondo's army disobeyed a direct order from Sigismondo not to cross the battle line on pain of death. In Parleo's account, the captain saw a golden opportunity, broke formation, engaged the enemy and achieved a stunning victory. Although he was victorious and

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<sup>34</sup> Basinio, *Hesperidos*, XII, lines 556–80: “rapta manu Peliae liquefactum fistula plumbum/ferrea sulphurea jaculata est concava flamma./Fulminis acta citi glans more per aethera lapsa/praevolat, et fragiles incognita dividit auras./Sulphureos vix ille globos, et pulveris umbras/viderat infelix, haesitque in pectore plumbum,/lumina conlapso nigrae texere tenebrae,/liventesque genas infecit pallor, et ungues/purpureos quondam; corpus calor ipse reliquit. . ./praecipue Pandulphiades Sismundus. . ./talia suspirans imo qui pectore rupit./Non haec, o Narni, fuerant mea iussa, nec olim/ista dabam praecepta tibi; certare caveres/me sine . . . pro raptis, optime, teris/occidis, et pulchro gaudes occumbere letho./Haud impune Duces Celtarum, et barbarus hostis/ista ferent, Narni. . . .”

saved many peoples' lives, according to Sigismondo's edict, the captain should be executed for disobedience. This is the problem that the Riminese humanist, Parleo, presents in his oration. Like Basinio's epic, this oration also presents the 1453 campaign in classical language and form. But unlike Basinio, Parleo draws almost exclusively on examples from Roman republican history and presents war from the perspective of the entire army. Sigismondo's role is limited, downplayed, and criticized in favor of an unknown heroic captain in his army. When he wrote this oration and perhaps delivered it, Parleo was employed in Sigismondo's court as an orator and teacher of classics. The fact that he is openly critical of Sigismondo is an example of how much creative license humanists had in Italian courts.

The oration falls into the category of judicial oratory, which in itself makes it of interest since most humanist oratory was epideictic.<sup>35</sup> The lack of names and specific details and the highly stylized Latin prose suggest that the oration was probably a showpiece that dealt with a hypothetical and not a real situation. It could have been a rhetorical exercise in argumentation. As a judicial oration, it is more directly connected to Cicero's famous orations on similar subjects than epideictic oratory. The Ciceronian language and form of Parleo's oration complement his examples from republican Rome and reinforce the issues he raises about the limits of princely power and the nature of virtue, vows, and obedience.

Parleo uses examples from republican Rome in order to argue against unconstrained princely rule, and he does so in the presence of Sigismondo Malatesta, who for all intents and purposes ruled Rimini.<sup>36</sup> The fact that a humanist like Parleo could openly espouse such classically-inspired republican values while in the service of Sigismondo Malatesta, a man of extremes, whom Pius II would later call the "scum of Italy," demonstrates the highly malleable character of classical republicanism and the universalist and mutable aims of Quattrocento humanism.<sup>37</sup> But, while many classical republican-civic

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<sup>35</sup> On judicial oratory, see Cicero, *De Inventione*, II.3; *De Oratore*, I.xxxi: 138–141. For judicial oratory in the Renaissance, see Paul Oskar Kristeller, "Humanism and Scholasticism in the Italian Renaissance," in *Renaissance Thought: The Classic, Scholastic, and Humanistic Strains* (New York, 1961), 104–5, 155–56.

<sup>36</sup> Jones, *Malatesta of Rimini*, 308–12.

<sup>37</sup> On Sigismondo's mostly ill-founded bad reputation, see Jones, *Malatesta of Rimini*, 176–79, 225. Ciceronian republicanism could be just as useful in signorial

values were commonly praised in both Republics and lordships in the Renaissance, Parleo's argument and the Livian examples he uses are explicitly anti-monarchical.<sup>38</sup> As if acknowledging Sigismondo's sole authority and power in Rimini, Parleo's captain recalls the legendary clemency of Caesar, echoing Cicero's praise of Caesar's mercy in the *Pro Marcello* and the *Pro Ligario*. But then Parleo abruptly switches to the example of Rome itself:

But why do I recall Caesar, since we have the testimony of the Roman people, whom all princes and peoples have always tried to imitate in military science and all the good arts (fol. 350v).

The example of Caesar falls before the entire Roman people.<sup>39</sup> While Sigismondo should imitate the clemency of one dictator, he should look even more to the model of the Republic of Ancient Rome.

In the oration, Parleo uses a Ciceronian device by impersonating the captain, who pleads for his life before court judges and Sigismondo Malatesta. In his *De militia*, Leonardo Bruni similarly employed the rhetorical technique of *sermocinatio* at the end of his treatise with a soldier's soliloquy.<sup>40</sup> As the *Rhetorica ad Herennium* (IV.43, IV.52) outlines, by placing arguments in the mouth of a character, the orator achieves greater dramatic effect and immediacy. Among others, Cicero famously impersonated Appius Claudius, the icon of Roman virtue, who sternly condemns his courtesan progeny Clodia in the *Pro Caelio* (3). While Cicero only used *sermocinatio* or *prosopopoeia* in parts of his orations, Parleo adopts the captain's voice throughout the entire oration.

In the exordium, Parleo's captain tries to secure the goodwill of the audience by praising his most important judge, Sigismondo, and expressing his concern over the lack of military experience of the

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cities as in republics, like Florence and Venice, as discussed in James Hankins, "Introduction," and "Rhetoric, History, and Ideology: the Civic Panegyrics of Leonardo Bruni," in James Hankins (ed.), *Renaissance Civic Humanism: Reappraisals and Reflections* (Cambridge, 2000), 1–14, at 6–7, and 143–78, at 176–78; and Paul A. Rahe, "Situating Machiavelli," in *ibid.*, 270–308, at 286–92.

<sup>38</sup> On civic humanism in lordships as well as republics, see James Hankins, "The 'Baron Thesis' after Forty Years and Some Recent Studies of Leonardo Bruni," *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 56 (1995), 309–38, at 327–30; Witt, *Footsteps*, 493–94.

<sup>39</sup> For the great variety of humanist interpretations of Caesar, see Ronald G. Witt, "The *De Tyranno* and Coluccio Salutati's View of Politics and Roman History," *Nuova rivista storica*, 53 (1969), 434–74.

<sup>40</sup> Bayley, *War and Society*, 335, 387.

other courtroom judges.<sup>41</sup> He praises and calls on the wisdom and justice of Sigismondo Malatesta as commander-in-chief:

Since you are usually grateful and mindful of even the smallest favors, I do not doubt that today you will consider this matter, than which nothing could be more important as regards you, the army, and the state. I am convinced that you will recognize that those who think I should be punished envy not only the knowledge and success of my accomplishment but also the praise of your gratitude and clemency (fol. 347r).

Through praise, the captain both reminds Sigismondo of his duty and suggests a course of action. As courtly humanists knew well, praise can have a hortatory purpose.

The captain then explains his apparent disobedience with a series of arguments. First of all, he redefines the nature of obedience:

Those are the best who both think by themselves and guide all things to their right end; they are in second place, who obey those correctly commanding; and those who neither think for themselves nor listen to good commanders are useless. Since commanded by no one I understood the commander's will and carried it out to the desired and best end . . . everyone ought to judge me the best. . . . If you, commander, had had the opportunity, place, and time, and the certain hope of accomplishing a doubtless victory, as I saw and understood with my long experience and knowledge of war; had you seen this yourself, surely you would have given the signal and commanded me to fight, and condemned my waiting and staying in place. . . . I fear that you are seeking praise for severity, [but] will be accused of ingratitude, and that everyone will believe that you were envious of my bravery and denied the glory of kindness (fol. 348r).

In his defense, the captain claims that he was obedient to the larger purpose of victory over the enemy. He obeyed the will of the commander, not the direct order. There are different kinds of obedience, he argues; the most praiseworthy is the soldier who intelligently obeys. He implies that Sigismondo issued his orders out of ignorance and inexperience, and, therefore, was not to be obeyed. Obedience is only required when the command accords with the circumstances and reason. Baldassare Castiglione addressed the analogous problem of whether a courtier was required by obedience to act immorally at the command of his prince. The whole purpose of a courtier's

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<sup>41</sup> Cicero recommended this kind of beginning, *De Oratore*, I.143.

actions, he says, should be directed at guiding the prince toward virtue and away from vice.<sup>42</sup> The courtier has to be able to speak the truth without fear of punishment. So, as in Parleo's oration, in the *Courtier*, obedience is limited to actions that accord with virtue and reason. The captain also raises the danger of ingratitude in rulers, against which Livy and later Machiavelli warned.

In addition to the claim that he was not disobedient to the commander's will, the captain calls on the authority of the soldier's oath—the *sacramentum*—against the commander's orders:

That ancient oath (*sacramentum*), which we all swore before we entered the military, that we would always fight for your dignity, the safety of all, and victory, was before my eyes, and it occurred to me that our ancestors often swore to their consuls and generals that they would never leave out of flight or fear nor break the line except to take an arrow, wound the enemy, or save a citizen. If I had scorned doing these this time, everyone would call me a perjurer, a hater of your rule, and a traitor of the army (fols. 348v–49r).

Parleo's reading of the *sacramentum* is not much different from his ancient source. He paraphrases Livy, who includes the same exceptions to the oath ("wound enemy, or save citizen").<sup>43</sup> Bruni and Manetti in contrast follow Cicero's discussion of the *sacramentum* and associate the vow strictly with obedience to the commander.<sup>44</sup> Parleo chose a different ancient source in order to use the same concept to defend the opposite course of action.

Parleo's discussion of the *sacramentum* leads to the next and most daring argument of the oration, in which the captain challenges the authority of the prince:

For we are all bound more to that ancient oath than to the recent edict of a commander (*ducis*). For those things that come before in time are also rightly superior, since they were not annulled. We owe more to victory, more to welfare, more to trust, more to the oath, and more to our homeland, religion, and worship, which ought to be always firm and inviolate, than to the orders of commanders, which

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<sup>42</sup> Baldassare Castiglione, *Il cortegiano*, IV.5–26.

<sup>43</sup> Livy, XXII.38.2.

<sup>44</sup> Manetti in da Bisticci, *Commentario*, 211; Bruni in *De militia*, ed. Bayley, 375 (also, 321); Cicero, *De Officiis*, I.36–37. Over 600 manuscripts of Cicero's *De Officiis* survive. In addition to Cicero's ethical doctrine, it supplied humanists with numerous exempla from Roman history. On this, see Marcia L. Colish, "Cicero's *De officiis* and Machiavelli's *Prince*," *Sixteenth Century Journal*, 9 (1978), 80–93.

change according to place, subject, and time; especially if, while [we are] following the orders of our commanders, a manifest loss occurs to the state (fol. 349r).

Parleo's captain here explicitly criticizes Sigismondo's orders—their authority is trumped by that of the soldier's ancient duty to his oath, religion, and patriotism, three key classical values that had been enshrined in Cicero's writings.<sup>45</sup> Unlike Basinio's image of heroic, divinely inspired leadership, Parleo's oration emphasizes the transitory and fallible nature of rule, so evident in Sigismondo's own conduct as a *condottiere*.

Parleo supports these ideas with numerous examples of heroic disobedience from Ancient Rome culled mainly from Livy, who celebrated republican Rome. Before the first printed edition of Livy in 1469, Petrarch, Poggio Bracciolini, Panormita, Facio, Lorenzo Valla, and other Italian humanists studied, emended, and commented on most of the extant books of Livy's history in Florence, Naples, and other places.<sup>46</sup> While modern scholars have debated about Livy's relationship with Augustus and the limits of his republicanism, his history in any case is laudatory and nostalgic about the ancient virtues of the republic, which he contrasts with the moral degeneration of his own times.<sup>47</sup> Parleo chooses Livian examples that emphasize the necessity of limiting power and the superiority of consensual over dictatorial rule. He first expresses the limitations of dictatorial power by referring to Caius Minucius Rufus' celebrated disobedience in the war against Hannibal:

Cavalry master, Caius Minucius [M. Minucius Rufus], fought against Hannibal with great success against the orders of the dictator Fabius Maximus [Cunctator]. After he explained why he had disregarded Fabius' orders, the Roman people not only absolved him with incredible favor but gave him the highest command (fol. 349v).<sup>48</sup>

In this example the emphasis is again on the clemency not of a ruler but of the Roman people. In the *Discourses on Livy*, Machiavelli criticizes the so-called prudence of Fabius Maximus in avoiding battle

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<sup>45</sup> On Renaissance Humanists' inheritance of classical values enshrined in Cicero, see for example Witt, *Footsteps*, 493; Hankins, "Baron Thesis," 327–30.

<sup>46</sup> A. H. McDonald, "Livius Titus," *Catalogus Translationum et Commentariorum: Mediaeval and Renaissance Latin Translations and Commentaries*, ed. Paul Oskar Kristeller and F. Edward Cranz (Washington, 1971), II, 333–36.

<sup>47</sup> Kraus and Woodman, *Latin Historians*, 70–74.

<sup>48</sup> Livy, XXII: 8, 12–30, 49; Plutarch, *Fab. Max.*, 4–13; and Polybius III 87, 89.

with Hannibal and the Carthaginians. He argues that “a general who proposes to remain in the field cannot avoid battle if the enemy is determined to force one on him at all costs.”<sup>49</sup> This defense of disobedience would have pleased Parleo’s captain. Nevertheless, although he states in numerous places that he was forced to fight or flee, Parleo’s captain also claims to have liberated the city (fol. 348r), which would have entailed an initiating attack rather than a responsive defense. Parleo is more radical than Livy and Machiavelli in arguing that disobedience is justified not only in defense but also in attacking.

Parleo’s next example also comes from Livy:

L. Papyrius Cursor, in the battle he waged as dictator against the Samnites, when he left for Rome gave the cavalry master Fabius [Rullianus] control of the army and ordered him not to fight in his absence. Fabius, however, seized upon an opportunity and destroyed the enemy. Condemned to death by the dictator, he was freed in such great favor of the soldiers and people that Papyrius himself was almost killed (fol. 349v).

Livy’s account of this episode is much more elaborate and includes the lengthy debate over Fabius’ fate, in which his father, the Senate, the tribunes of the people, and the army all argue for leniency.<sup>50</sup> Parleo focuses on how the army and the people as a whole are superior to an unjust, overweening, and jealous dictator. This particular example serves not only to criticize authority but to threaten it: if Sigismondo, like Papyrius, condemns the captain, the army and the people of Rimini might rise up against him.

In the *Discourses on Livy*, Machiavelli later addressed the problem that the Papyrius Cursor episode raises and came to contradictory conclusions. In his section on rewards and punishments, he praises the Romans for punishing with severity, saying that liberty will be lost once a citizen feels that he can do wrong with impunity.<sup>51</sup> But in his section on ingratitude, he says that the Romans were considerate and careful about punishing commanders of armies. He paraphrases Fabius’ father’s argument that the Romans had never treated

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<sup>49</sup> Machiavelli, *Discorsi*, III.10 (trans. 434). See the stimulating commentary in Harvey C. Mansfield, *Machiavelli’s New Modes and Orders: A Study of the Discourses on Livy* (Chicago, 1979), 350–54. Machiavelli nevertheless defends Fabius as waiting to do battle with Hannibal at his advantage.

<sup>50</sup> Livy, VIII, 29–35; IX.

<sup>51</sup> Machiavelli, *Discorsi*, I.24.



a defeated commander in the way that Papyrius wanted to treat a victorious one.<sup>52</sup> When Machiavelli discusses the Roman practice of granting discretionary powers to commanders, he praises Fabius' prudent disobedience not only in engaging the enemy against the Senate's orders but in starting a whole new war.<sup>53</sup> In his section on advice to generals, however, he decries the pathetic state of Italian armies compared with the French and the ancient Roman.<sup>54</sup> Machiavelli then praises the army of ancient Rome and emphasizes the danger of unpunished disobedience by quoting Papyrius Cursor's speech against Fabius in Livy:

no one would have respect either for men or for gods; they would obey neither the edicts of generals nor the auspices; soldiers without provisions would wander about here and there alike in peaceful and in hostile territory; forgetful of their oath. . . .<sup>55</sup>

And yet, such was the state, Machiavelli writes, of the armies in Renaissance Italy.

In other works, Machiavelli also asserts that discipline and obedience are essential for an army.<sup>56</sup> Armies are made obedient, he writes, by the fear of punishment. This leads Machiavelli to his famous praise of cruelty and the dictum that it is better to be feared than loved. For, while Scipio Africanus' overindulgence caused his army to revolt against him, Hannibal's "inhuman cruelty" allowed him to hold together a giant army from diverse backgrounds and to incite them to fight far from home in foreign lands.<sup>57</sup> Harsh punishment is therefore necessary to deter disobedience and cowardice.<sup>58</sup> Here, Machiavelli argues the opposite from that of Parleo's captain, who, according to Machiavelli, should be punished and made an example.<sup>59</sup> Like

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<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, I.31.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, II.33.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, III.36.

<sup>55</sup> Livy, VIII.34; Machiavelli, *Discorsi*, III.36.

<sup>56</sup> Machiavelli, *The Art of War*, II.140, 166; VI.163; *The Prince*, X. See also Felix Gilbert, "Machiavelli: the Renaissance of the Art of War," in *Makers of Modern Strategy from Machiavelli to the Nuclear Age*, ed. Peter Paret (Princeton, 1986), 25.

<sup>57</sup> Machiavelli, *The Prince*, XVII. This contradicts Vegetius, III.4, who says that work and routine promote discipline better than fear of punishment.

<sup>58</sup> Cf. Cicero, *De Officiis*, I.88–89, who cautions that punishment should not be insulting but limited to public utility.

<sup>59</sup> In the *Art of War* (VII.159), however, Machiavelli follows Vegetius (III.26) and argues that the ability to take advantage of an opportunity in war is of paramount importance.

Machiavelli, Parleo applies ancient examples to current situations to criticize his own times, but he comes to opposite conclusions. Livian examples from ancient republican Rome carried with them implicit and explicit political ideas, but these ideas could be refashioned to suit antithetical arguments. Parleo's chosen form, a judicial oration as opposed to a treatise, had a greater effect on the argument than even the classical examples chosen.

Parleo also cites ancient examples of punished disobedience:

Let no Postumius or Torquatus taunt me, who ordered their sons to be executed for having scorned their orders and fought. For if we want to judge by military examples, we ought to imitate those who excelled above others. Who could ever compare Torquatus or Postumius . . . to Caesar (fol. 350r)?

Titus Manlius Torquatus' condemnation of his son in 340 B.C. was a notorious example of harsh justice. Because of an ill-omen, the consuls, one of whom was Manlius' father, ordered that no one was to leave his position to fight the enemy. Manlius, however, met an enemy's challenge, fought him, and was victorious. For this disobedience his father condemned him to death. All were horrified by this command. Livy, nevertheless, said that the brutality of the punishment made the soldiers much more obedient and dutiful.<sup>60</sup> He praises Torquatus' patriotic sense of duty to the republic (not to a ruler). Like Cicero, however, Parleo criticizes the father's severity.<sup>61</sup> His entire oration could be read as a response to this episode.

Spurius Postumius was condemned for negotiating peace with the Samnites after the defeat of the Caudine Forks in 321 B.C. without the approval of the Senate or people. He and the other negotiators were handed over to the Samnites in order to free Rome of any moral obligation. Postumius, who volunteered to return to Samnite captivity, was eventually released and returned to Rome. For his self-sacrifice he enjoyed greater glory than the Samnites did who had been victorious over the Romans. Livy and Cicero present this as evidence of the sacrosanct nature of oaths, provided that they are approved by the Roman people.<sup>62</sup> Machiavelli uses this example to demonstrate both that promises made under duress should not be

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<sup>60</sup> Livy, VII.7–8.

<sup>61</sup> *De Officiis*, III.112.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, III.109; Livy, IX.5.

observed, and that glory can be achieved even in defeat.<sup>63</sup> In this instance, Parleo does not follow Cicero and Livy, but, like Machiavelli, criticizes ancient sources in order to support his argument. According to the rules of rhetoric, Parleo refers to examples that are detrimental to his argument in order to criticize them and to present counter-arguments.<sup>64</sup>

Near the end of the oration, instead of ancient examples or political theory, the captain calls upon his personal relationship with Sigismondo. He presents himself as Sigismondo's loyal servant:

Think about my trust and good will toward you. Remember in how many and what great wars and battles you have relied on my trustworthy and brave work. Look at these scars and view the wounds, which I have received on both sides while fighting for your safety and dignity (fol. 351r-v).

The scars recall Marcus Antonius's peroration for the soldier Manlius Aquilius. Cicero says that Antonius tore off the toga of the defendant, exposing his many scars.<sup>65</sup> Parleo's captain now turns to his family, keeping in mind the Ciceronian dictum that emotions often sway decisions and gain the favor of the audience.<sup>66</sup> Parleo has followed Cicero quite literally by actually becoming the passionate subject of the speech, the captain:

My elderly father will mourn in squalor, when the comfort of his old age is taken away. My children will be deprived of support. Nor will you, the best father and dearest children, see me die in a foreign land. You will not give kisses, address me, [nor] be pulled away from me with the sweetest embraces; you will not prepare my funeral . . . (fol. 351v).

Of the three duties of rhetoric, to teach, to delight, and to move, Cicero believed that the third was the most important.<sup>67</sup> Vivid descriptions, such as the above consequences of conviction on the captain's family, were meant to arouse a strong emotional response.<sup>68</sup> In this

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<sup>63</sup> Machiavelli, *Discourses*, III.42; Mansfield, *Machiavelli's New Modes*, 426–28. Cf. Cicero, *De Officiis*, I.32, III.103–16.

<sup>64</sup> Cicero, *De Oratore*, I.143.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*, II.194–96.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*, II.178–90; Quintilian, *Institutiones Oratoriae*, 6.2.27.

<sup>67</sup> Cicero, *De Oratore*, I.17, 53.

<sup>68</sup> This rhetorical technique was intimately related to ancient theories of perception and memory, as discussed in Ann Vasaly, *Representations: Images of the World in Ciceronian Oratory* (Berkeley, 1993), 91–104.

passage, in fact, Parleo closely paraphrases the example of vivid description offered in the *Rhetorica ad Herennium* (IV.51). Just as he began the oration with a laudatory plea for Sigismondo's clemency, so the captain ends in true Ciceronian form with an emotional appeal by conjuring up a sad image of loss.

The form that Parleo chose, the Ciceronian judicial oration, carried with it an entire political ethos, which was diametrically opposed to the epic verse of Basinio, who for the most part cancels out all other political and military actors in order to emphasize Sigismondo's singular rule. More than Homer's Achilles, Basinio's Sigismondo becomes all of Italy in the epic struggle against the foreigners. With its sense of imperial destiny, the *Hesperis* recalls the *Aeneid*. Sigismondo fights against Alfonso and Ferdinand of Aragon, as Aeneas vied with Turnus over Italy. Unlike Basinio, who creates a monolithic vision of heroism and monarchy, Parleo, a humanist in the same court at the same time but using the different form of judicial oratory, seeks to remind the prince that his power rests on the popular will and the competence of his officers. Sigismondo, he warns, should avoid the accusation of envy and ingratitude, and embrace the many heroes in his army.

Even as a showpiece or a rhetorical exercise, Parleo's oration is a radical critique of Malatesta rule in Rimini. It raises issues and problems about the nature of military power, the conduct of war, and the limits of a prince's authority that were hotly debated in fifteenth-century Italy. Its contents, the many examples culled from Livy of a virtuous Roman republic curtailing the power of an overweening dictator, are subversive. As Machiavelli demonstrated, however, these same examples could be used to entirely different ends. Even more than the contents, the very form of the oration imitates and transmits the liberal argumentative and oppositional character of the courtroom in Cicero's republic. Paradoxically, it is perhaps because it is a rhetorical exercise, because Parleo takes the rules of the genre's decorum more seriously than he does the potential political peril of criticizing the prince, that the contents are so radical. Parleo's oration, a Ciceronian "incantation for reviving the ancient Roman spirit," captures and promotes a distinctly republican discourse on the necessary limitation of political and military power.

## APPENDIX

Venice: Biblioteca Marciana, MS Marc. Lat. XI 80 (3057), fols. 347r–51v.

Petri Parleonis pro milite qui sponte aciem egressus fudit hostes cum Sigismundus Pandulphus Malatesta Florentinorum exercitus imperator adversus hostes dimicaturus edixisset nequis aciem capitis pena iniussu suo egrederetur.<sup>69</sup>

Quamquam in hoc iudicio multa me perturbant Sigismunde imperator illud tamen valde consolatur quod apud te causam acturus sum quem pro singulari consilio et sapientia tua nihil temere sed omnia recto iudicio rectaque animi moderatione iudicaturum scio. Dolebam enim et vehementer angebar, cum iactari quorundam vocibus audivissem in foro iudiciali hanc causam tractandam esse, ubi scientiae militaris imperiti homines de militari facinore iudicarent. Hunc vero cum apud te bellicarum artium scientissimum haec omnis causa ver-setur non vereor quin ingenium artem atque fortitudinem nostram quibus victoria parta est non modo in totius exercitus contione maximis ornes laudibus verum etiam summis praemiis et honoribus afficias. Nam cum vel minimorum beneficiorum gratus ac memor esse soleas, dubitandum non est te huius hodierno die rationem habiturum, quo nullum in te nec in exercitum nec in rem publicam hoc tempore maius esse potuit. Illud quoque mihi persuadeo eos te cogniturum qui me puniendum censent, non solum mihi rei bene gestae scientiam ac felicitatem verum etiam tibi gratitudinis et clementiae laudem invidere. Quae ut vera esse scias, ab ea potissimum parte incipiam, qua maxime nituntur. Eam enim et falsam et infirmam intelliges, cum non solum omnia mandata tua summa fide diligentiaque servaverim, sed etiam nihil mihi unquam fuerit antiquius quam ut salutis et dignitatis tuae rationem haberem. Quamobrem imperator pro tua singulari animi mansuetudine proque mea in te benivolentia et fide etiam atque etiam abs te peto ut si quid unquam tibi

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<sup>69</sup> On this manuscript, see Paul Oskar Kristeller, *Iter Italicum, A Finding List of Uncatalogued or Incompletely Catalogued Humanistic Manuscripts of the Renaissance in Italian and Other Libraries* (7 vols.; Leiden, 1963–92), II, 254; Pietro Zorzanello, *Catalogo dei Codici Latini della Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana di Venezia (non Compresi nel Catalogo di G. Valentinelli)* (3 vols.; Trezzano, 1980–85), I, 532; Jacobo Morelli, *Codices Manuscripti Latini Bibliothecae Nanianae* (Venice, 1776). Morelli, no. 95, 114.

gratum potestati salusque ac gloria tua fuerunt semper vita ipsa cariores, hodierno me die in capitis et famae periculo facile ac benigne audias. Nam si mansuetissimus, si gratissimus, si clementissimus et esse et dici cupis, eas optare causas et iudicia debes quibus iure permultos servare iisque praestantissimis divinisque virtutibus in quam plurimos uti possis, quod profecto tibi hodiecontigit, si me solita attentione ac animi tranquillitate audiveris. Nam cum mei adversarii dicant idcirco de me supplicium sumendum quod tua mandata non servaverim, ostendam primum iussa tua diligenter me servasse, deinde etiam si minime servata essent, nulla me poena afficiendum, sed premiis potius et honoribus ornandum esse. Quae ita esse ut cognoscas velim adversarii atque mundi mihi rendeant quid sit imperatoris iussa non servare, equidem dicturos scio, contra eius voluntatem facere.

Quod [Fol. 347v] si ita res habet imperator, quid magis voluisti quam victoriam? Profecto nihil. Ultimus enim rei militaris finis victoria est, ad quam optimos imperatores et consilia et rationes et dicta et facta omnia dirigere atque referre oportet. Nam quid aliud tua militaris industria, quid vigiliae, quid famis, sitis, caloris, frigoris patientia tua volunt, quid noctu dieque sollicitus et intentus exercitum circuis? Castra vallo et fossa munis? Turres excitas? Alios in stationibus disponis? Alios in insidiis locas? Alios ad hostium itinera, loca, consilia, exploranda promittis? Quid multi et vix tolerabiles labores tui aliud cupiunt? Quo spectant, quo referuntur, nisi ut victoriam assequere?

Profecto necesse est alterum mihi fatearis, aut vincere te aut vinci voluisse. Verum hoc dicere aut credere cum nefas omnino sit abhorreatque a fide ac maiestate nominis tui, relinquatur ut vincere volueris. Quare cum ipso hodierno consilio ac fortitudine auctor victoriae fuerim, tua mandata diligentissime servavi. Namque absurdissimum est eum, qui iussus lignatum aquatum pabulatumque profectus sit, dicere imperatoris mandata servasse; qui autem victoriam adeptus fuerit voluntatem eius contempsisse. Vel igitur siquis fugae ac stragis auctor fuisset, adversus tuam voluntatem fecisset; Ita quod victoriae et salutis omnium causa fuit, tuae voluntati satisfecit. Quod siqui aliter sentiunt, hi non rei publicae modo atrocissimi sunt hostes, verum etiam nefario scelere dignitatem tuam contaminare student. Nam cum vita, salus, gloria, libertas, religio, et siqua iis maiora dici possint victoria constent, eos profecto vitae omnium salutis, gloriae, libertatis, religionis, perniciosissimos hostes dixerim, qui harum rerum omnium auctorem et conservatorem interficiendum putant. Omnes

urbes, populi, reges atque nationes quae unquam bello et armis contenderunt, singulare studium, curam atque diligentiam per se ac suos omnis et duces et milites fixerunt atque locarunt ut victoriam dulcissimum ac optatissimum laborum finem assequerentur; hi autem cum dignitate, consilio, ac fortitudine partam accusant, insectantur, oppugnant. Quodque omnibus praeter caetera maximae curae semper fuit, hi negligunt, contemnunt, despiciunt. Maledici profecto calumniatoris, insidiatoris, et sicarii officium est, aliquid velle optare laudare comprobare.

Postea vero quam id ingenio et industria quispiam fuerit assecutus, accusare, vituperare, damnare verbaque et syllabas ipsas, non rem, non factum, non comunem omnium utilitatem, non salutem denique ipsam atque gloriam inspicere praesertim cum nihil crudelius nec immanius nec tetrius excogitari possit quam argutiis quibusdam eius vitam oppugnare qui iura, qui leges, qui maritos uxoribus, uxores viris, parentes liberis, liberos parentibus, amicos, cognatos, affines, [Fol. 348r] ac denique focos, templa, patriam et cetera quae nobis carissima esse debent, defendit, servavit, restituit. Famae vero et gloriae tuae quantum hi consulant facile intelligere potes. Nam si me ut isti volunt necandum iusseris quid populus Florentinus iudicabit? Nempe quod graviter et moleste victoriam feras, quod eorum felicitatem doleas, quod aliud animo agitabas, aliud quaerebas. Ut enim si me absolveris omnis te victoriae studiosissimum fuisse iudicabunt; ita siquid acerbius in me statueris, gravi te suspicione contaminabis. Equidem si recte inspexeris tanto diligentius ac melius tuam voluntatem servasse videor, quanto sine ullo iussu tuo quod faciendum velles per me ipsum intellexi. Qua in re non solum obedientiae laudem, verum etiam intelligentiae ac magni consilii gloriam sum adeptus. Hesiodus poeta quod post ab Aristotele ac aliis multis usurpatum est: Eos inquit optimos esse qui per se omnia et intelligunt et ad rectum finem perducunt. Eos autem in secundo esse loco qui recte monentibus obedient. Qui vero nec ipsi per se sciunt nec bene monentes audiunt eos prorsus esse inutiles. Quare cum a nullo monitus imperatoris voluntatem intellexerim, intellectam vero ad optatum ac optimum finem perduxerim, verecunde dicam sed tamen salutis causa dicam, optimum me omnes iudicare debent. Eum autem ea ex causa interficere qua optimus sit appellandus immanis est sceleris, extremae vero crudelitatis ac iniustitiae, qua ex re premia laudem ac honores quispiam mereatur ea ipsa vituperationem mortem ac ignominiam pati. Si tu imperator habuisses et rem et locum et tempus et certam

perficiendi spem et haud dubiam victoriam ut ipse vidi ac longo bellorum usu scientiaque cognovi, tu quoque praesens inspexisses, nonne dato signo pugnare me iussisses morantemque ac in loco perstantem obiurgasses? Ergo quod tu iussurus eras imperator, quod volebas, quodque optabas ut fieret, quod doluisses nisi factum esset, id postquam non modo est factum sed etiam recte ac felicissime factum vituperabis? Accusabis? Damnabis? Vereor ne severitatis laudem quaereas, ingratitude crimen subeas, ne ve te omnis et mihi fortitudinis tandem invidisse et tibi manusetudinis gloriam ademisse credant. Apud maiores nostros ob victoriam de hostibus partam imperatores triumphali corona donabantur, qui urbem obsidione liberassent obsidionali (=corona), qui civem servassent civica. Ego qui haec omnia simul feci et cives servavi et urbem obsidione liberavi et de hostibus victoriam reportavi, non solum nullo honesto praemio decorabor, sed qua poena desertores ac proditores afficiuntur eadem ego et fortis et victor et optimus trahar ad supplicium? Praeterea quae sunt iussa tua imperator? Profecto nequis aciem egrediatur. At ego ubi aciem egressus sum?

Equidem tamdiu [Fol. 348v] in loco mansi quamdiu manendum fuit. Postea vero quam idoneam sum rei benegerendae facultatem nactus, cum ea legatione cui me profeceras quadrato agmine hostem adortus nec ipse nec meorum quisquam aciem egressus est sed omnis in acie confertissimi sumus consilio ac scientia et ordine rem gessimus. Itaque si tantum in verbis nec in sententia manendum fuerit imperator nulla me poena nulloque supplicio afficere debes. Atque huius mandati tui necesse est certam rationem causamque fuisse, verum quae alia esse potuit nisi ut intenti atque parati omnes imperium tuum expectarent, ne alter alterum impediret, ne turbarentur ordines, ne diminuerentur acies, neve rei benegerendae quicquam esset impedimenti aut morae sed cum adoriendi hostis tempus, res, occasioque daretur, cuncti alacres praelium mirent ac fortiter pro omni salute victoriaeque pugnarent. At ego nec turbam ordines nec aciem diminui nec cuiquam impedimento fui. Verum cum pugnandi tempus et occasionem et victoriam in manibus adesse cerneremus tuque alio in loco et parte occupatus intento mihi et imperium tuum expectanti signum dare non posses, rei et officio deesse nolui sed omnia statim arripienda contendi quae et laeta et felicia nobis fortuna offerebat, praesertim cum intelligerem nisi eo loco rebus nostris subvenissem et rei publicae damnum et exercitui stragem et tibi ac reliquis dedecus et infamiam imminere. Itaque quando consilio ac fortitudine has calami-



tates et damna prohibui gloriamque atque dignitatem omnium servavi, victoria et triumpho omnis decoravi. Quis est qui non fateatur me diligenter tua iussa voluntatemque servasse? Verum quando satis iam ostendisse videor, nihil me contra tuam fecisse voluntatem, reliquum est Sigismunde ut ostendam nulla me poena, etiam si peccassem, afficiendum sed honoribus et praemiis potius ornandum esse. Nam cum ea parte locatus essem, qua succedentibus hostibus aut fugere mihi aut dimicare necesse est, malui honestae victoriae quam turpissimae fugae rationem habere. Quod eo magis censui faciendum, quod te saepissime nos monentem audivi, ut fortiter potius in acie pugnando caderemus quam turpiter ignaviterque cedendo vitae salus quaeretur. Quamobrem huius precepti memor et antea multis ac magnis praeliis abs te ob res benegestas honoribus et praemiis ornatus, turpissimum iudicavi si ego et tuus et fortis miles gloriam tot laboribus partam brevi momento amissem, eo praesertim tempore quo si fugissem et totius tusciae libertas et exercitus salus atque gloria nulla futura videbatur. Cum autem fortiter pugnando victoriam, libertatem, decus, et gloriam parari nobis intelligerem, malui tot bona vincendo retinere quam turpiter fugiendo perpetuae calamitatis auctor esse.

Atque vetus sacramentum quo militiam ingressuri omnes adacti sumus ut tuae semper dignitatis salutisque omnium ac victoriae causa pugnaremus [Fol. 349r], ante oculos mihi versari et promissam fidem expetere videbatur. Veniebat quoque in mentem maiores nostros saepe suis consulibus et ducibus iurasse fugae ac formidinis causa numquam abituros nec ex ordine recessuros nisi teli sumendi aut ferendi hostis aut civis servandi causa. Quae hoc tempore facere si contempsissem et periurum me et imperii tui contemptorem et exercitus proditorem universi appellarent. Omnis enim veteri magis sacramento quam novo ducis edicto obligamur. Nam quae tempore praeveniunt iure quoque potiora sunt, quando illis abrogatum derogatumque non fuerit; Plusque victoriae debemus, plus saluti, plus fidei, plus sacramento, plus denique patriae, religioni, et sacris, quae firma semper et inviolata esse debent quam quibusdam iussis imperatorum, quae pro locorum rerumque ac temporum conditione mutantur. Praesertim si dum imperia ducum nostrorum exequimur manifestum rei publicae damnum infertur. Populus Romanus de Albino supplicium non sumpsit qui exercitum incolumem potius sub iugum mitti quam ferro et fame a Iugurta clausum amittere voluisset. Tu me securi percutiendum iusseris quod honeste vincere quam

turpiter vinci maluerim? Atqui ille gravi flagitio exercitum cum servasset, non est interfectus, ego cum dignitate victoriam assecutus capite puniar? Equidem ut eram ultimo supplicio dignus, si ignominia de manibus victoria erepta esset, ita praemiis ac honoribus afficiendus, quando fortitudine mea de hoste triumphamus. Namque et te et Malatestam novellum cuius pacis et belli dicta et facta plurimum semper habuerunt, et alios multos excellentes in re militari viros saepissime dicentes audivi: posse quidem imperatores mandata suis ducibus et militibus dare, fortitudinem vero in audiendo et prudentiam in agendo non posse, quae si absint ceteras omnis eximias pugnandi artes mancas et infirmas esse. Hanc autem rerum agendarum prudentiam rerumque omnium discrimen, cum neque doceri neque dari cuique possit, necesse esse multarum rerum usu et scientia parari, ut sciamus quid quoquo in loco faciendum aut non faciendum sit, bonorumque et malorum, honesti et turpis, utilis et inutilis delectum habeamus. Illud quoque saepius audivi in re militari melius posse imperatores ex rebus ipsis consilium capere quam rebus dare. Accidere enim saepissime ut quae antea visa praemeditata et iussa fuerint, locis rebusque mutatis eorum quoque ratio atque ordo immutetur.

Quamobrem cum et usus bellorumque scientia doceret et temporis necessitas urgeret eo esse tempore dimicandum, volui ea [Fol. 349v] mihi praescribere quae neque tu ante rem iubere nec in re ipsa cum abesses praecipere potuisti. Igitur quod mandaveris nequis iniussu tuo aciem egrederetur, ut sapientem decuit imperatorem fecisti. Quod autem ipse rei benegerendae tempus cognoverim, teque absente animus in audiendo fuerit, sum prudentis ac fortis ducis officio functus. Quod si fortes et prudentes laudibus semper ac praemiis digni habiti sunt, cur me fortissimum et prudentissimum contemnis imperator? Equidem pace tua dixerim, quanto prudentia, consilio, ac animi magnitudine praestas, tanto foedius tibi fuerit si nullam harum virtutum rationem habueris. Neque enim vitia et virtutes ex ipsis tantum rebus sed ex hominum etiam dignitate spectantur. Caius Julius Caesar dum adversus Nervios dimicaret tanta hostium celeritate et successu et incursu oppressus est ut signum militibus dare et caetera quae ratio ac ordo militaris postulabat iubere non potuerit. Labienus autem ac ceteri eius duces rerum difficultatem conspicati, non duxerunt Caesaris imperium qui alia in parte curabat expectandum, sed scientia et usu bellorum dubiis rebus subvenientes quisque pro se ea omnia fecerunt, quae eo tempore administranda videbantur.

Quamobrem parta victoria Caesar non modo eos vituperandos non censuit quod sine imperio pugnassent, sed laudibus ornandos quod ea sibi praescribere scivissent, quae eo tempore fieri oportuisset. Caius Minucius magister equitum contra imperium Fabii Maximi dictatoris laeta magisque prospera victoria adversus Anibilem cum pugnasset cogereturque neglecti imperii a Fabio rationem reddere, a populo Romano incredibili favore non modo absolutus verum etiam summo imperio donatus est. Namque post hominum memoriam magister equitum cum dictatore imperii iure adaequato bella administravit. L. quoque Papyrius cursor, eo bello quod adversus Samnites dictator gessit, cum Romam profecturus esset Fabio magistro equitum ad exercitum relicto iussit ne se absente pugnaret. Ille autem occasionem rei benegerendae nactus hostes delevit. Quamobrem capite a dictatore damnatus tanto militum ac totius populi favore et gratia liberatus ut parum etiam abfuerit quoniam Papyrius ipse interficeretur.

Ergo quod Caesar bellandi magister laudavit, quod populus Romanus comprobavit, quod honoribus et praemiis [Fol. 350r] decoravit, tu Sigismunde vituperabis? Tu damnabis? Tu ignominii et ultimo supplicio persequeris? Minucius qui pari fere clade in proelio superior apparuit, summo imperio a populo Romano donatus est. Ego qui salvus omnibus hostes delevi a te vita privabor? Fabius cum dictatoris iniussu milites in pugnam eduxisset fortunamque tentasset, omni est poena absolutus quod feliciter pugnaverat. Ego abs te ductus in aciem cum non sine gravi scelere atque ignominia non potuerim non pugnare, parta victoria crudelissime necabor? Atque illi eo loco et tempore dictatorum suorum imperio contempto pugnaverunt, quo si a praelio abstinuissent et ipsi laudem et eorum res publica detrimentum nullum habitura fuit. Ego autem ea temporis atque locorum necessitate ductus ut nisi cum hostibus conflissem et ipse perpetua ignominia notatus essem et res publica Florentina nullum nunc exercitum nullam libertatem haberet. Igitur quod necessitate pugnavi non sum puniendus, quod consilio atque fortitudine hostem superavi praemiis ornandus sum. Nam si qui temeritate dictatorum iussa contempserunt tamen quod vicerunt fortitudinis ac victoriae ornamenta assecuti sunt, cur ego qui summa prudentia summoque consilio pugnavi, parta victoria necabor? Illi in dubium certamen descendentes fortitudinis laudem atque fructum habuerunt, ego ad certam victoriam profectus ob rem benegestam interficiar? O scelus indignum! O fides prisca! O fortissimi viri apud maiores nostros ob egregia facinora publice honoribus et praemiis decorati, ad id ne

flagitii aetas nostra prolapsa est ut benemeriti de imperatore, de exercitu, de patria damnentur ad mortem? Ut qui omnis servavit, is ante ipsorum qui servati sunt oculos perimatur? Ut qui in omni piissimus fuit is omnibus spectantibus impie interficiatur? Neque mihi quisquam Postumus vel Torquatus obiiciat, qui iusserunt filios necandos quod contempto prius imperio pugnaverunt. Namque si militaribus exemplis iudicandum est, eos imitari debemus qui ea in re praeter caeteros claruerunt.

At quis est qui vel militari scientia vel virtute vel rerum gestarum gloria Mallium [*sic*] Torquatum aut Postumium C. Caesari comparare [Fol. 350v] queat? Hic enim suis armis suaque virtute universum fere terrarum orbem perdomuit, illi vix nescio quos popellos subegerunt. Caesar quinquagies collatis signis adversus hostes dimicavit, illi vix levia quaedam certamina tentaverunt. Caesar ut innumeras taceam urbes, populos, et provincias quas incredibili felicitate atque gloria subegit, undecies centum et nonaginta milia hominum praeter eos qui in civilibus victoriis ceciderunt, variis proeliis pugnando interfecit. Illi vix unquam tot milites conspexerunt armatos. Atque Caesaris clementiam nemo unquam vituperavit, illis non defuerunt qui eorum crudelitatem accusarent. Sed quid Caesarem commemoro cum populi Romani testimonium habeamus quem non modo in re militari sed in omnibus bonarum artium studiis omnis principes atque nationes semper imitari contenderunt. Hos igitur tibi ante oculos propone, hos meditare, hos dies noctesque pacis et belli res fortiter ac sapienter regere et gubernare cupiens imitare, illorumque potius utere clementia quorum in rebus gerendis industriae ac virtutis splendorem admirantur quam illorum moribus quorum nihil est aliud praeter eam crudelitatem illustre. Equidem vera tibi dicam imperator non tantum vitae cupiditas me movet quantum gloriae tuae fama. Ego enim ut fortissimum decet virum ex hac vita migrabo iudicaboque nihil in morte mihi accidisse mali, quippe qui omni scelere vacem putemque omnia in me et virtute mea sita esse. Neque enim mihi mors si hanc miseram vitam ademerit, amorem in imperatorem, studium in omnis, pietatem in patriam adimet. Illi mortem formidant qui cum ignavia et turpitudine non qui fortiter et honeste vixerunt. Neque idcirco boni se miseros putant quod nullum recte factorum praemium assequantur. Amplissimum enim et maximum virtutis est praemium gloria, quam non ferrum, non ignis, non aqua, non tempestas, non fortuna, non ulla denique truculenta vis eripere cuiquam potest? Quodque omnium maius est: mortui beneactae vitae rerumque gestarum gloria vivunt.

Sed me hercule timeo ne tui nominis splendor cuius semper cupidissimus fui [Fol. 351r] aliqua in honesta labe tenebrisque obscuretur. Nam cum reges atque imperatores non minorem clementiae quam militaris scientiae rationem habere debeant, vereor ne malivolorum meorum opinionem secutus crudelitatis potius quam iustitiae nomen assequare; cumque principes ac bellorum duces gratos et officiorum memores esse oporteat, dubito si benemerentem interfeceris ne omnis te ingratum existiment. Quae res quantum tibi ac rebus tuis detrimenti sit allatura, hinc intelligere potes quod nihil omnium benivolentiam, amorem, fidem, caritatem, pietatem magis abducit, amovet, repellit, fugat, quam ducum et principum adversus benemerentes ingratitude. Nihilque tantum animos omnium et fidem, diligentiam, industriam, labores, atque omne officiorum genus, quantum gratitudo conciliat atque allicit. Haec enim facit milites hostem ferire, fossas transcendere, urbes expugnare, omnia pericula adire, mortem contemnere. Ille sciat se omnium bellorum victorem, cuius gratitudinis opinio apud milites sit. Quod si pro honore ignominia, pro praemiis morte, pro amore odio, pro beneficiis damno, milites tuos affeceris imperatore, quis posthac pro amplitudine laudis et gloriae tuae pugnare ac ullum periculum adire aut audeat aut velit, praesertim si qua fuerint summa fide, amore, et consilio facta, metu crudelissimorum suppliciorum carere non possunt. Itaque quod tuum et proprium est, Sigismunde, gratitudinem quae in re ab omnibus virtutum mater appellatur meminisse nunc debes, ne virtus ea quam semper adamasti ulla ex parte abs te violata videatur. Quamobrem si unquam in aliquos gratus et memor fuisti, si te unquam clementissimum praestitisti, si bonos unquam et praestantes viros praemiis et honoribus affecisti, etiam atque etiam oro et obsecro, Sigismunde imperator, habeas potius rationem mitissimi ingenii tui quam sanguinis et caedis quae a tua natura semper abhorrerunt. Propone tibi ante oculos fidem ac benivolentiam in te meam. Reminiscere quot quantisque et bellis et praeliis opera mea et fida et fortissima usus fueris.

Aspice has cicatrices et quae vulnera adverso pectore pro tua salute atque [Fol. 351v] dignitate pugnando acceperim intuere. Quo animo exitium nunc omnem futurum arbitraris, cum florentem quondam me atque opibus pollentem et dignitate clarum et tibi carissimum multisque honoribus ac praemiis ornatum ac paulo ante hostium victorem aspexerit, nunc vero calamitosum, abiectum, invisum pro capite suppliciter orantem, et demum prostratis omnium superiorum

dignitatum ornamentis colla securibus tuis praebentem intueatur? O commilitones! O socii mei! Ego ne a vobis per eum divellar pro cuius dignitate saepe vos adhortatus sum? Ego ne vos deseram quibus nihil amplius in vita sine me iucundum fore scio? Me miserum atque infelicem, liberos et parentem in summas calamitates incidisse, per quem praemia et honores expectabant. Senex pater levamine senectutis amisso in squalore lugebit. Filii pueritiae ac educationis adiumento privabuntur. Neque tu optime pater nec vos carissimi filii me aspicietis in aliena terra morientem. Non dabitis oscula, non alloquemini, non mutuis suavissimisque amplexibus a me divellemini, non curabitis funus, non caetera praestabitis munera, quae etsi minus iucunda utrisque, tamen gratissima patres filiis, filii parentibus in extrema fortuna praestare consueverunt. Quae omnia quamvis gravia et molesta sint, rogo fortissimo feratis animo nec mortem lugeatis meam quando nullo scelere, nulla ignavia, nulla perfidia morior, sed quod nimium amavi, nimis pro imperatoris gloria et dignitate laboravi, nimis omnium salutem dilexi, defendi, servavi. Haec vos consolentur, haec levant dolorem vestrum, haec piissimas lachrymas abstergant. Sed iam dicendi finem faciam Sigismunde imperator, si illud te unum monuero, ut quando animus erga te meus integer ac rectus fuit, quando nec odio, nec malivolentia, nec imperii tui contemptu, sed fide, amore, et tuae amplitudinis augendae causa pugnavi, quando hostem superavi, quando tibi victoriam, decus, honorem, gloriam, triumphum attuli, habeas mansuetudinis et clementiae rationem qua nulla alia re propius ad deos immortales accedere potes.

## CHAPTER THREE

### BENEDETTO ACCOLTI: A PORTRAIT\*

Robert Black

The Florentine house of Benedetto Accolti, chancellor of Florence from 1458 to 1464, was at Por' San Piero (today the intersection of Via del Proconsolo and Via del Corso), in the parish of the Badia Fiorentina;<sup>1</sup> Accolti was therefore a neighbor of Vespasiano da Bisticci, whose bookshop was just a little further up Via del Proconsolo, on the Via dei Librai (today Via della Condotta).<sup>2</sup> Well acquainted as they must have been, Vespasiano's brief life of Accolti has to be the starting point for a portrait of Benedetto Accolti.<sup>3</sup>

Vespasiano does not mention Accolti's family name, but refers to him as Benedetto d'Arezzo; in fact, Accolti's native city exercised a formative influence in his life. When Accolti was born in 1415, Arezzo had been under Florentine rule for 31 years. These were not happy times for Arezzo. The city's population fell from about 7,000 in 1390 to 4,123 in 1427.<sup>4</sup> Aretines suffered punitively high taxation at the hands of Florence, harsher not only than the Florentines themselves, but even than other Florentine subjects such as the Pisans.

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\* This paper was read in Arezzo on 12 December 2003 at the conference entitled "I cancellieri aretini della repubblica di Firenze." The following abbreviations will be used: BA = Robert Black, *Benedetto Accolti and the Florentine Renaissance* (Cambridge, 1985); ASA = Arezzo Archivio di Stato (Prov. = Deliberazioni del Magistrato dei Priori e del Consiglio Generale); ASF = Florence Archivio di Stato; BNCF = Florence Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale; *Dialogus* = Benedetto Accolti, *Dialogus de praestantia virorum sui aevi*, in *Philippi Villani liber de civitatis Florentiae famosis civibus*, ed. G. Galletti (Florence, 1848), 105–28 (the corresponding passages in the presentation copy, Florence Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana Pl. 54.8, will also be indicated); Vespasiano = Vespasiano da Bisticci, *Le vite*, ed. Aulo Greco (2 vols.; Florence, 1970–76), I. Reference will be made to BA unless there is a need to update the treatment with new material, interpretations, or publications. All dates have been modernized.

<sup>1</sup> BA, 67.

<sup>2</sup> Eve Borsook, *The Companion Guide to Florence*, 5th ed. (London, 1991), 54, 109–10.

<sup>3</sup> Vespasiano, 595–98.

<sup>4</sup> BA, 6.

Florence limited Aretine autonomy, suppressing local magistracies such as the *notaio dei danni dati*, leading to complaints that “the property of Aretine citizens is going to ruin, as it does every day and ever since the city of Arezzo has not had a *notaio dei danni dati*.”<sup>5</sup> Aretine poverty in these years was recognized by the government of Florence, who even established a commission “to look into and gain information about the indigence and poverty of the commune of Arezzo as well as of its population.”<sup>6</sup> It is hardly surprising that there were plots and rebellions to end Florentine rule in 1390, 1400, 1409, 1431,<sup>7</sup> and 1437<sup>8</sup>—the result of which was further tightening of the Florentine yoke.

The reaction of Benedetto Accolti’s father, Michele, to the deteriorating conditions in Arezzo was emigration to Florence, where he established himself as a second-rank lawyer by 1416, with both a legal practice and intermittent appointments to teach law at the University of Florence.<sup>9</sup> Financially, this was a prudent step: by 1429 Michele Accolti had emerged as the second-richest Aretine lawyer (the richest was Gregorio Marsuppini, also resident in Florence), with twice the assets of Benedetto di Giovannozzo, the third-richest, who, unlike Gregorio and Michele, had remained in Arezzo.<sup>10</sup> Despite professional ties with Florence, Michele never abandoned Arezzo: not only did he contribute to the support of his own relatives there, but he also served occasionally as a communal magistrate;<sup>11</sup> his legal

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<sup>5</sup> Robert Black, “Arezzo, the Medici and the Florentine Regime,” in *Florentine Tuscany: Structures and Practices of Power*, ed. William J. Connell and Andrea Zorzi (Cambridge, 2000), 293–311, at 306–7, n. 56: “e beni de’ cittadini d’Arezzo vadino in ruina . . . come ogni di vanno e sono andati, da poi è manchato il detto ufficiale nella deta città d’Arezzo.”

<sup>6</sup> Black, “Arezzo, the Medici and the Florentine Regime,” 308, n. 65: “ut investigarent et se informarent de egestatibus et paupertatibus comunis Aretii et seu etiam personarum eiusdem.”

<sup>7</sup> *BA*, 3–5.

<sup>8</sup> Arthur Field, “Leonardo Bruni, a Florentine traitor? Bruni, the Medici, and an Aretine Conspiracy of 1437,” *Renaissance Quarterly*, 51 (1998), 1109–50.

<sup>9</sup> *BA*, 26–33. Michele Accolti received a high assessment for the Aretine *lira* in 1417 (L. 1, S. 16, D. 2: ASF, Tratte 862, Contrada Sancti Laurentini; ASF, Ufficiali dello studio, 4, fol. 171r).

<sup>10</sup> *BA*, 35.

<sup>11</sup> In addition to Michele Accolti’s civic activities cited in *BA*, 29–30, 35–36, also to be noted are his activities on Aretine civic business in 1413 (ASA, Prov. 5, fol. 96v), 1414 (ASA, Prov. 5, fol. 110v), 1429 (ASA, Prov. 6, fol. 34r) and 1435 (ASA, Prov. 6, fol. 190v) and as a legal expert on behalf of the commune in 1413 (ASA, Prov. 5, fols. 100v–101r), 1416 (ASA, Prov. 5, fol. 194v–95r). Besides



services on behalf of Arezzo were particularly appreciated,<sup>12</sup> and when he died in 1441, the Aretine commune voted 10 florins to honor his memory.<sup>13</sup>

Like his father, Benedetto Accolti established himself in Florence, but, again following the paternal example, he too remained a patriotic Aretine. Accolti's commitments in Florence normally obliged him to decline communal office in Arezzo, and in the end he petitioned the Aretine priors to allow his cousin, Agnolo, to serve in his place.<sup>14</sup> Nevertheless, he was still able to act on behalf of Arezzo, for example as a legal adviser, as an ambassador, and as the city's official representative at Carlo Marsuppini's funeral in 1453.<sup>15</sup> He was particularly involved in Arezzo's educational affairs, helping to find a teacher for the communal grammar school in 1454, and playing a decisive role in securing Florentine approval for the revival of Arezzo's imperial privilege to re-establish its university in 1452.<sup>16</sup> Arezzo greeted Accolti's election as Florentine chancellor in April 1458 with "joy, happiness, satisfaction, and delight."<sup>17</sup> In the years of his chancellorship, Arezzo frequently sought his help;<sup>18</sup> so solicitous were the Aretines of his goodwill that in 1460 they absolved him from liability to all their taxes, "considering the favors and

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Michele's absence from communal office in Arezzo noted in *BA*, 37, he was also unable to lend his legal expertise to the commune in 1418 (ASA, Provv. 5, fol. 244v) and in 1432 (ASA, Provv. 6, fol. 136r).

<sup>12</sup> *BA*, 30.

<sup>13</sup> *BA*, 38.

<sup>14</sup> *BA*, 77–78.

<sup>15</sup> *BA*, 74. Accolti was elected advocate of the Aretine commune together with his brother Francesco in October 1442 (ASA, Provv. 7, fol. 122r). He acted as a legal adviser to the Aretine commune while living in Florence in February 1444 (ASA, Provv. 7, fol. 177r), as well as on behalf of the commune in July 1442 (ASA, Provv. 7, fol. 119v), May 1453 (ASA, Provv. 9, fol. 181v) and at the end of February 1455 (ASA, Provv. 10, fol. 8r–v). For further references and information on Accolti's activities on behalf of Arezzo, see Robert Black, "Cosimo de' Medici and Arezzo," *Cosimo "il Vecchio" de' Medici, 1389–1464*, ed. Francis Ames-Lewis (Oxford, 1992), 33–47, at 35, 41.

<sup>16</sup> See now Robert Black, ed., *Studio e scuola in Arezzo durante il medioevo e il Rinascimento: i documenti d'archivio fino al 1530* (Arezzo, 1996), 198–200, 217, 519. Accolti also intervened actively in the patronage of the Aretine convent of Santa Flora e Lucilla at the beginning of 1450: see Arezzo, Biblioteca della città, MS 400, fols. 81v–82r. For relations between Accolti and the Aretine communal confraternity of S. Maria della Misericordia in the 1460s, see Arezzo Archivio della Fraternalità dei Laici, 49, fols. 42v, 46v, and 111v.

<sup>17</sup> *BA*, 331: "gaudio letitia et consolatione ac iocunditate."

<sup>18</sup> *BA*, 331–32.

innumerable services gained and received from our Florentine rulers through the intervention of Messer Benedetto, as well as those to be obtained in the future.”<sup>19</sup> On his death, the commune sent two ambassadors to give their condolences to his widow in Florence, and it approved a contribution of 30 florins to the funeral expenses of Accolti, “who, during his lifetime, used to be and was the defender, protector, and benefactor of this city, its men, and its people in all and sundry matters.”<sup>20</sup>

Accolti’s greatest debt to his native city was as beneficiary of Arezzo’s remarkable intellectual and scholarly heritage. Arezzo had been one of the leading Italian medieval centers of learning, boasting the premier Tuscan university in the thirteenth century and the pre-eminent Tuscan representative of early humanism, Geri di Federigo. This learned tradition continued uninterrupted, distinguished in the fourteenth century by such figures as the book collector Simone della Tenco and the humanist encyclopedist Domenico di Bandino, and culminating in a veritable Aretine renaissance under the auspices of Brunì, Marsuppini, Tortelli, Poggio, and Aliotti. This vital humanist tradition had been vigorously supported by the Aretine commune through the civic grammar school, where prominent teachers had included Taddeo da Siena, Goro d’Arezzo, Domenico di Bandino and Francesco di Feo: Francesco’s forty-year tenure as Arezzo’s grammar teacher from 1389 to 1428 included pupils such as Brunì, Marsuppini, Tortelli, Aliotti, Griffolini and, of course, the two Accolti brothers, Francesco and Benedetto.<sup>21</sup>

Vespasiano stressed that Accolti came from a respectable family (*fu d’onestissimi parenti*) and indeed by the fourteenth century the

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<sup>19</sup> *BA*, 332, n. 18: “consideratis gratiis et innumerabilibus servitiis habitis et receptis a dominis nostris florentinis mediantibus intercessionibus dicti domini Benedicti et etiam obtinendis in futurum.” Another instance of Accolti’s positive relations with the Aretine commune during his chancellorship occurred when he intervened to have the election of a *notaio del danno dato* prorogued in 1463: ASA, Provv. 12, fol. 48r; on this office, see most recently Connell and Zorzi, *Florentine Tuscany*, 210–11, 234, 295, 300–308.

<sup>20</sup> *BA*, 335, n. 45: “qui erat et fuit semper dum vivebat defensor, proteptor et benefactor istius civitatis et hominum et personarum eiusdem in universalibus et particularibus.”

<sup>21</sup> *BA*, 12–21; Robert Black, “Humanism and education in Renaissance Arezzo,” *I Tatti Studies. Essays in the Renaissance*, 2 (1987), 171–237, at 216 ff.; Robert Black and Louise George Clubb, *Romance and Aretine Humanism in Siense Comedy, 1516: Pollastra’s Parthenio at the Studio di Siena* (Siena, 1993), 55 ff.; Black, *Studio e scuola*, 168–77.

Accolti could count numerous prosperous notaries, physicians, merchants, and bankers. The family did not become members of the Aretine elite until the turn of the fifteenth century, when Accolti's father took a doctorate in law from Bologna. Law was the preeminent profession in Arezzo, and thereafter the Accolti took a relatively prominent place in Aretine civic life, comparable to a family such as the Marsuppini. The elite status of the fifteenth-century Accolti in Arezzo is evident from Michele's marriage to a daughter of another prominent Aretine lawyer, Rosello Roselli; indeed her dowry of 300 florins was a substantial amount, comparable to the dowries of other leading Aretines, and it indicates the respect commanded in Arezzo by Michele. The fourteenth-century Aretine chronicler, Bartolomeo di Ser Gorello, regarded the Roselli as one of the most notable Aretine families, and a road in the Aretine quarter of Porta di Borgo was named Borgo dei Roselli. Other marriage alliances of the fifteenth-century Roselli included the Bacci, the second richest Aretine family in 1427.<sup>22</sup>

Michele Accolti always remained an Aretine, but his son Benedetto was rapidly assimilated into Florentine society, marrying the daughter of a first-rank Florentine political figure, the lawyer Carlo Federighi, in 1446. Earlier Aretine expatriates had made prominent Florentine marriages: Bruni to a member of the da Filicaia family and his son to a Castellani; Marsuppini to a Corsini; Poggio to a Buondelmonti. All these marriages were facilitated by the considerable wealth commanded by Bruni, Marsuppini, and Poggio. Accolti enjoyed no such advantage: the estate of 1,600 florins left by his father was meager in Florence, and he received from his Federighi bride, Laura, a dowry of only 500 florins, a modest sum indeed in Florence.<sup>23</sup> When his children were married after his death, his widow was barely managing with her eight children on capital worth about 2,500 florins; she could not erect a monument in his memory at Santissima Annunziata, at a cost of 150 florins, as evidently required by his will, and as her children declared in 1469, "We have been left eight children, young orphans without a father, struggling to lead an honourable life."<sup>24</sup> And yet Accolti's children all married into families

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<sup>22</sup> *BA*, 22–40.

<sup>23</sup> *BA*, 59–64.

<sup>24</sup> *BA*, 335–36: "Siamo rimasi questi otto figliuoli picholi e popilli e senza padre, ch'anno assai da potere vivere a onore."

of high social rank in Florence: Altoviti, Baldovinetti, Alamanni, Mori-Ubaldini.<sup>25</sup> What may have facilitated the Accolti family's rise in Florence was an ancient Florentine lineage (an advantage not enjoyed by Bruni or Poggio, both of humble parentage, or Marsuppini, from a rustic family established in Arezzo only during the mid-fourteenth century). The Accolti of Florence were prominent in public life from the mid-thirteenth to the mid-fourteenth century; although there is no conclusive genealogical evidence to connect these Florentine Accolti with the Aretine family, nevertheless in several sixteenth-century *prioristi*, the two families were linked.<sup>26</sup> It is possible that the families with whom Accolti and his children contracted marriage alliances were aware of this earlier Florentine Accolti family, and consequently were more willing to accept Benedetto and his children into their ranks.

Vespasiano stressed the powerful influence of Accolti's father in his and his brother Francesco's choice of profession: "his father was a grave lawyer and wanted his two sons to devote themselves to law too, and work under him in Florence, where he taught, appointed by the university officials."<sup>27</sup> The professional entrée which Michele provided his sons included not only his collection of law books, valued at 290 florins and constituting a considerable collection in the period, but also appointment at the Florentine Studio for Benedetto, beginning in 1435 at an annual salary of 20 florins, rising to 60 florins in 1438. The Accolti brothers' rapid progress in the legal profession could not but have been helped by their mother's family, the Roselli, who constituted a veritable legal dynasty, including their grandfather Rosello, three of their uncles (including the pre-eminent canonist Antonio Roselli), and four cousins.<sup>28</sup>

Vespasiano highlighted Benedetto Accolti's distinguished legal career in Florence, both as a practicing lawyer and as a professor in the Florentine studio:

<sup>25</sup> BA, 333–34.

<sup>26</sup> BA, 63–64.

<sup>27</sup> Vespasiano, 595: "il padre suo fu solennissimo dottore, et volle che dua figliuoli ch'egli aveva dessino opera alle leggi, et entrassino sotto lui in Firenze, che legeva, condotto dagli ufficiali dello Istudio."

<sup>28</sup> BA, 41–44. On the Roselli family, see also ASF Notarile antecos. 11696, fol. 136r (11 June 1422), when Accolti's uncle, the famous canonist Antonio Roselli, witnessed the renunciation by his nephew Rosello del fu Giovanni Roselli, then a student in canon law in Florence, of a benefice near Anghiari in favor of the bishop of Arezzo.

He had the greatest skill as a civil and canon lawyer, teaching in Florence, where he had an extremely wide following, acquiring throughout Italy an enormous reputation through students who came from various localities. Besides teaching, he excelled in giving legal counsel, with numerous clients coming to him from beyond Florence. Whatever concerned the law, its interpretation, and the conduct of legal cases, if Messer Benedetto was present, everyone else stood silent, bowing to his authority.<sup>29</sup>

Accolti taught almost continuously in the Florentine Studio from the late 1440s until the 1460s, thus even after he became chancellor in 1458.<sup>30</sup> Accolti's earnings as a lawyer eventually reached between 500 and 600 florins a year—which, as one historian has suggested, were about half the annual profits of the Florentine branch of the Medici bank.<sup>31</sup>

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Further information has come to light regarding Benedetto Accolti's younger brother, Giovanni, born in 1423 (*BA*, 41). I am grateful to James Banker for referring me to a notarial document dated 9 June 1442 (ASF, Notarile antecosimiano 17741, fols. 107v–108r), when Giovanni rescinded his will dating from the previous May and donated his part of his father's estate to his three surviving brothers, Benedetto, Francesco, and Donato. I am also grateful to Alfredo Baldini, the son of Bianca Maria Accolti Gil, for informing me that Giovanni Accolti became a soldier, establishing himself in the Kingdom of Naples in the town of Conversano (near Bari). There he married Dorotea Cocleario, so establishing the Conversano branch of the Accolti family; at the end of the seventeenth century, his direct descendant Giovanni Battista Accolti joined the name of his wife's Spanish noble family, Gil, to his own, so founding the Accolti Gil family, whose last direct descendant is Dott. Baldini himself.

<sup>29</sup> Vespasiano, 595, 597: "Ebbe grandissima peritia in ragione civile et canonica et lesse in Firenze, dove ebbe grandissima audientia, et acquistò per tutta Italia grandissima riputatione, perché aveva assai scolari di varii luoghi. Valeva assai, oltre a legere, nel consigliare, che venivano allui assai, per consigli, fuori di Firenze . . . delle legge, et del saperle interpretare, et dove s'aveva alegare in qualche cause, dov'era meser Benedetto, tutti gli altri istavano cheti per la sua autorità."

<sup>30</sup> *BA*, 59–60, 87, 113. See now Jonathan Davies, *Florence and its University during the Early Renaissance* (Leiden, 1998), 177 for payments to Accolti in 1450, 1451, 1454, 1459, 1460, and 1464 for his university teaching in Florence. The payment of Accolti's salary by the Ufficiali dello Studio on 2 August 1454 is noted in ASF Notarile Antecosimiano 6139, not foliated.

<sup>31</sup> Lauro Martines, *Lawyers and Statecraft in Renaissance Florence* (Princeton, 1968), 105. Since the publication of *BA*, the following further information on Accolti's legal career has come to light: on 1 December 1446 Francesco di Tommaso Sasseti paid Accolti 5  *Fiorini larghi* for a defense, in which his legal colleagues were Giovanni Buongirolami da Gubbio, Sallustio Buonguglielmi da Perugia, Otto Niccolini, and Piero Ambrosini da Iesi (ASF, Carte strozziane, V.1749, fol. 44v); in 1448 Accolti and Buonguglielmi gave a *consilium* in favor of Bartolomeo and Francesco Sasseti in a property dispute with their sister Ginevra (ASF, Carte strozziane, V.1751, fol. 154v); on 5 April 1456 Carlo di Messer Palla Strozzi paid Accolti 3  *Fiorini larghi* for a *consilium* and on 20 July 1456 1  *Fiorino largo* for an "aleghazione fe' [. . .] al giudice"

With such a family legal tradition behind him and with such professional success, it must be wondered why Accolti made the abrupt career change in 1458 to assume the Florentine chancellorship. Here Vespasiano is particularly helpful: “Messer Benedetto gave up legal practice willingly, saying that it was nothing but caviil.”<sup>32</sup> Accolti had obviously been expected by his father and by his mother’s family to follow their lucrative and distinguished profession, but it is clear that his first love was literature. Before he was able to launch fully into a professional legal career at the age of 25 in 1440, Accolti had probably already composed four vernacular love poems, and within a year he wrote his entry for the famous Certame Coronario of 1441. He was to compose two more vernacular poems: an invective, written in the mid-1440s, and a panegyric of the Virgin, dated 1450. Like the poetry of his brother Francesco and of his cousin Rosello, Benedetto’s verse was highly regarded in the fifteenth century. According to Vespasiano, “he composed truly graceful vernacular verses,”<sup>33</sup> and his poems achieved considerable popularity soon after they were composed: indeed, two manuscripts are known to have been copied in the 1440s, two more in the 1450s, five others are attributable to the mid-fifteenth century, and there are 32 fifteenth-century manuscripts in all.<sup>34</sup> However, Accolti’s real passion was for the *studia humanitatis*: as Vespasiano declared,

He was a learned humanist, with universal knowledge, besides humanist works, of sacred texts and of histories. If he had not died and if he had persevered in these studies, he would have accomplished marvels, because there were few books in Latin that he had not read.<sup>35</sup>

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(ASF, Carte strozziane V.13, fol. 51 left and right). Accolti received payments for legal advice from the Opera del Duomo in Florence on 4 February 1457, 2 March 1457, 27 February 1458, and 9 March 1464 (Florence Archivio dell’Opera del Duomo VIII-1-26, fol. 181 left and fol. 22 left; VIII-1-27, fol. 66 left; VIII-1-37, fol. 27 left). Accolti had a credit of 20 *fiorini d’oro* with the bank of Bono di Giovanni Bono in November 1451 (ASF, Carte strozziane V.1749, fol. 97r-v); on 13 April 1464 Accolti acted as an arbiter in an Aretine dispute regarding the restitution of a dowry (ASF, Diplomatico, Fraternita dello Spedale della Misericordia d’Arezzo). In 1448 Accolti was formally qualified to hold the office of assessor of foreign judges in Florence (*BA*, 67); he had been drawn to serve as assessor of the *podestà* in February 1444, but had been disqualified for the office (ASF, Tratte, 172, fol. 154v).

<sup>32</sup> Vespasiano, 597: “Ritrasessi meser Benedetto volentieri dalle legge, perché diceva non erano se non gavillazioni.”

<sup>33</sup> Vespasiano, 596: “era molto legiadro nel dire in versi volgari.”

<sup>34</sup> *BA*, 44–47.

<sup>35</sup> Vespasiano, 596, 598: “Ebbe notitia di questi istudii d’umanità . . . aveva universale notitia, oltre agli studii d’umanità, dell’opere sacre e delle istorie . . . Se non

His early poetry demonstrates an enthusiasm for Latin literature: one of his love *capitoli* is based on the first book of Cicero's *Disputationes tusculanae*; his contribution to the Certame was a reworking of another Ciceronian philosophical dialogue, *De amicitia*; and his invective followed Ovid's *In Ibin*.<sup>36</sup> In one of his love poems, Accolti says that in his youth he devoted himself to the study not only of law but also of letters:

While in my first flush of youth,  
Following the lead of God and my own nature,  
I turned my mind to  
The study of law and Latin learning.<sup>37</sup>

In 1436, the great humanist Poggio wrote to the 21-year-old Accolti, praising his command of Latin:

Your letters have delighted me, and I admire your ability to write with eloquence, ornament and fluency. . . . In every period of history very few authors can with any justice be called eloquent. I see that you have made great strides in this discipline, and I congratulate you for devoting your intellect to the cultivation of letters, which not only can prove profitable but may also win you esteem.<sup>38</sup>

Family expectations and the discouraging outcome of the Certame in 1441, in which the laurel crown was denied to any of the competitors, turned Accolti back to the legal straight and narrow. Nevertheless, law for him was always a profession, not a calling. Unlike his brother Francesco or his uncle Antonio Roselli, Benedetto Accolti made no theoretical contributions to law. Indeed, his literary aspirations never abated. Only a few months after his marriage, Accolti seized upon the idea of abandoning his legal career in Florence and seeking a position as a humanist in the papal Curia. Writing for assistance to Poggio, himself a leading figure in the Roman court, Accolti evidently complained of the distractions in Florence which kept him from humanist studies: Accolti was already yearning for his bachelor days of the late 1430s when, not yet burdened by the

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fussi sopravvenuta la morte, et egli avessi perseverato in questi istudi, arebe fatto maraviglie, benché la lingua latina avessi pochi libri ch'egli non avessi letti."

<sup>36</sup> *BA*, 46–47.

<sup>37</sup> Elena Jacoboni, "Le rime di Benedetto Accolti d'Arezzo," *Studi di filologia italiana*, 15 (1957), 241–302, at 278: "Quando nel primo giovanile stato/Da Dio e da natura fui condotto,/Volsi la mente sotto/Studio di legge e litteral dottrina."

<sup>38</sup> *BA*, 48.

demands of family and career, he had taken an active part in Florence's literary life, culminating in the Certame Coronario. But for the moment humanism continued to elude him: he received only discouragement from Poggio, who told Accolti that he was misguided to seek a post in Rome. Although the new pope, Nicholas V, would be making many appointments, continued Poggio, "there will be more workers than the size of the harvest warrants. I shall try to do what you ask, but I am doubtful of the outcome."<sup>39</sup>

After this rebuff, Accolti threw himself into family life and his legal career in Florence. But little more than a decade later another opportunity to follow a literary and humanist path came Accolti's way. Poggio himself had not found life in the Curia under Nicholas V congenial: on the contrary, he had become embroiled in rows with other papal secretaries, most famously, George of Trebizond and Lorenzo Valla. On the death of Carlo Marsuppini in 1453, Poggio was offered and accepted the Florentine chancellorship, but his tenure as chancellor was a disaster: at seventy-three, it was, to say the least, late in life to begin a new career. The pope had predicted that in less than a year he would be disillusioned with his fellow Florentines, and by November 1455 Poggio was making only desultory appearances in the chancery, carrying out his official duties with ill-concealed disdain. Poggio's outrageous behavior and dereliction of duty alienated Florentine public opinion, and his position was further undermined by the collapsing political control exercised by the Medici regime and by his close friend, Cosimo de' Medici, after 1454. In the end the regime could not save Poggio, who ceased to be chancellor after 31 August 1456. In the short term, chancery coadjutors filled the gap, but this could hardly be a permanent solution. After an interregnum of nearly two years, the first chancellorship was offered to and accepted by Benedetto Accolti on 17 April 1458.<sup>40</sup>

The first chancellor was Florence's senior civil servant, not a political official; Accolti's work involved administration, not politics.<sup>41</sup> Such a role suited his personality admirably: indeed, one reason for his election as chancellor was that he was acceptable both to leading

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<sup>39</sup> *BA*, 64–66.

<sup>40</sup> *BA*, 88–101.

<sup>41</sup> *BA*, 115–37.



members of the Medici regime (such as his close friend and legal colleague, Otto Niccolini)<sup>42</sup> and to its opponents<sup>43</sup> (in fact, Accolti had been elected before the Medici regained political control in August 1458 and indeed by a Signoria notable for its anti-Medicean legislation).<sup>44</sup> According to Vespasiano, “the entire city was satisfied with his election.”<sup>45</sup> Indeed, Accolti’s election was due, in Vespasiano’s words, to his “extremely genial demeanor with everyone.”<sup>46</sup> Another help was his “reputation, growing every day.”<sup>47</sup> Here Vespasiano was referring, in the first place, to his prodigious intelligence: “Messer Benedetto had an outstanding intellect. He was exceedingly sharp, and whatever he heard, he immediately grasped.”<sup>48</sup> What particularly impressed Vespasiano and his fellow Florentines was Accolti’s memory:

he had a marvelous memory, exceeding all his contemporaries’. As soon as he read a work, it was committed to memory. Whenever he was in the company of learned men, he distinguished himself with his memory.<sup>49</sup>

Here Accolti was able to cut a dash on behalf of the Florentine government:

He was the greatest credit to the government during his period of office, especially as a result of his prodigious memory. When foreign

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<sup>42</sup> *BA*, 103–4. In addition to Accolti’s personal contacts with the Medici family listed in *BA*, 104, see also ASF, Notarile antecosimiano 18159, fols. 16r–17r for a joint arbitration undertaken by Accolti and Cosimo de’ Medici; Accolti also had money deposited in the Medici bank in 1447 and 1448 (ASF, Carte Stroziane V.1749, fol. 68v).

<sup>43</sup> Accolti received a wedding present of 12 silver forks from Francesco di Matteo Castellani on 15 October 1447: see ASF, Corporazioni religiose soppresse dal governo francese 90.84 (2), fol. 31v, now edited by Giovanni Ciappelli in Francesco di Matteo Castellani, *Ricordanze, I: Ricordanze A (1436–1459)* (Florence, 1992), 107; see also *ibid.*, 45, and Giovanni Ciappelli, *Una famiglia e le sue ricordanze: i Castellani di Firenze nel Tre-Quattrocento* (Florence, 1995), 110 and n. 213. The Castellani were prominent anti-Mediceans in the years leading up to 1434: see Dale Kent, *The Rise of the Medici* (Oxford, 1978), *ad indicem*; Ciappelli, *Una famiglia*, 33–35.

<sup>44</sup> *BA*, 100–101.

<sup>45</sup> Vespasiano, 596: “la quale letione sodisfece a tutta la città universalmente.”

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*: “et maxime avendo di natura d’essere umanissimo cor ognuno. . . .”

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*: “Crescendo ogni dì in più riputatione. . . .”

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, 595–96: “Meser Benedetto fu di prestantissimo ingegno. . . . Era d’uno acutissimo ingegno, et non aveva così tosto udita una cosa, come egli aveva intesa.”

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*: “di miravigliosa memoria, quanto ignuno vi avessi l’età sua . . . non aveva letta opera ignuna, che egli noll’avessi a mente, et quando si trovava dove fussino uomini dotti, si faceva con questa sua memoria onore.”

ambassadors arrived during his tenure, the replies [on behalf of the Signoria] were delegated to Messer Benedetto. An ambassador of the King of Hungary, himself an extremely eloquent man, came and expounded his embassy in Latin; Messer Benedetto then committed it to memory, writing it down word for word in Latin and then translating it into the vernacular for the Signoria, who proceeded to give him the commission to reply on their behalf, telling him what to say; he then composed his reply in Latin extemporaneously, replying in such a way that the ambassador, who was himself extremely learned and eloquent, was astounded. While leaving, Messer Benedetto accompanied the ambassador, who praised him for his speech; Messer Benedetto then repeated the entire oration that the ambassador had delivered to the Signoria from memory, in Latin just as he had delivered it, repeating everything without omitting a word, in such a way that the ambassador, as he himself told me, was astonished; he praised his genius and his memory, which seemed to him a veritable marvel.<sup>50</sup>

Accolti's achievement as chancellor was not only on the ornamental level, so to speak. As Vespasiano wrote,

with regard to letters and everything pertaining to his office, he not only gave complete satisfaction as far as letters directed outside the city were concerned, but in all disputes which came before the Signoria, Messer Benedetto was summoned and with his help they were expeditiously dispatched.<sup>51</sup>

What Vespasiano is referring to is not only Accolti's ability to resolve legal questions that came before the government,<sup>52</sup> but also his

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<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, 596–97: “Fu grandissimo ornamento a quello Palagio nel tempo che vi stette et per la grande memoria ch'egli aveva. Venendo ambasciatori oltramontani a suo tempo, che ve ne veniva, le risposte erano comesse a meser Benedetto. Venne uno ambasciadore del re d'Ungheria, uomo eloquentissimo et ispose alla Signoria la sua imbasciata in latino, di poi meser Benedetto la mandò alla memoria, ch'egli la scrisse de verbo ad verbum in latino, di po' la fece volgare alla Signoria, et dandogli comessione la Signoria risponnessi dicendogli le parti che dicessi, composela latina ex tempore, et rispuose in modo che quello ambasciadore ch'era dottissimo et eloquentissimo, si maravigliò assai. Nella partita, meser Benedetto l'accompagnò, et lodandolo meser Benedetto di quanto aveva parlato, gli ridisse tutta l'oratione, ch'egli aveva detta alla Signoria, a mente, in latino come l'aveva detta, in modo, secondo mi disse, l'ambasciadore se ne maravigliò assai, che egli l'aveva detta tutta senza lasciarne una parola, et lodò mirabilmente lo ingegno suo et la sua memoria parendogli cosa maravigliosa.”

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, 596: “alle lettere et a ogni cosa che s'apparteneva di fare circa l'exercicio suo non solo s'adisfaceva alle lettere scriveva fuori della città, ma tutte le differenze che venivano inanzi alla Signoria, mandavano per meser Benedetto et col mezo suo se ne ispaciava assai.”

<sup>52</sup> E.g. cf. Black, *BA*, 173 and Appendix II.

achievement as an administrator. Indeed, Accolti emerges as one of the major reformers in the history of the Florentine chancery. Following the almost complete collapse of the chancery under Poggio from 1453 to 1456, Accolti restored administrative reforms first envisaged under Bruni and realized under Marsuppini but allowed to lapse at the end of Marsuppini's life. Moreover, he introduced a number of novel procedures which considerably improved the efficiency of the chancery. It is surprising to learn that previous chancellors, albeit distinguished humanists, had gone only a short way toward introducing the new learning into chancery records; a concern with the classical revival led Accolti not only to secure a permanent place for italic script in the Florentine chancery and to revive the lofty classical style in public letter-writing which had been achieved under Marsuppini but allowed to lapse under Poggio, but in fact credit goes to Accolti for extending classical Latin prose style beyond the public letters of the commune to diplomatic records and to the debates of the consultative assembly, the *pratica*. Under Accolti a spirit of reform entered the Florentine chancery, and in one sense the important reforms of his successor Scala were the legacy of Accolti's term as chancellor.<sup>53</sup>

Accolti's achievement as chancellor was appreciated by the Florentine elite. "I heard from many members of the regime who frequented the seat of government during his time of office," recorded Vespasiano, "that it had been a long time since any chancellor had conducted himself better."<sup>54</sup> His reforms were considered of the greatest importance by his contemporaries, who not only praised his work as chancellor unstintingly but also doubled his salary. Indeed, Accolti had the satisfaction of recording for posterity the *pratica* debate on

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<sup>53</sup> *BA*, 138–83. In *BA*, 168, while discussing the qualifications and contribution of Accolti's principal coadjutor in the chancery, Bastiano Foresi, I noted a series of books borrowed possibly from Poggio during his chancellorship by figures associated with humanist circles, including Naldo Naldi, Bernardo Nuti, Vespasiano, and Foresi himself. I am grateful to Silvia Rizzo for informing me that this list (knowledge of which I owed to Daniela De Rosa) had already been pointed to by Giuseppe Maria Cagni, *Vespasiano da Bisticci e il suo epistolario* (Rome, 1969), 80, n. 6; nevertheless, Cagni published only the loan of Alain de Lille's *Planctus naturae* to Vespasiano, not the other texts lent (Cicero, Horace's *Ars poetica*, Aristotle, Seneca, and Ezekiel), nor the other borrowers.

<sup>54</sup> Vespasiano, 597: "Udii da più di quegli del governo che usavano il Palagio nel tempo suo ch'egli era istato lungo tempo che nel Palagio non era stato uomo che si fussi portato meglio di lui."

5 February 1461 when the annual salary of the first chancellor was raised to the unprecedented level of 600 florins.<sup>55</sup>

Florentine chancellors had been great men of letters, and so Accolti was now in a position to make the *studia humanitatis* his central concern. As Vespasiano recounted, “he began, while serving as chancellor, to write.”<sup>56</sup> Before his sudden and premature death at the age of 49 in 1464, Accolti was able to complete two humanist compositions, a dialogue and a history of the First Crusade. The *Dialogus* has come to be known as *Dialogus de praestantia virorum sui aevi*, but this title was the invention of its first editor, Benedetto Bacchini, in 1689. It takes the form of two long speeches, one by an unidentified young man, who attacks the merits of modern times in contrast to antiquity, the other by Accolti, who defends the moderns against the ancients. They examine ancient and modern warfare, morals, statesmanship, cities, poetry, rhetoric, philosophy, law, and religion; although the young man offers a comprehensive defense of antiquity and condemnation of modern times, it is Accolti who is acknowledged as victor in the debate.<sup>57</sup>

The *querelle des anciens et des modernes* had been a major preoccupation in Florence since the publication of Bruni’s *Dialogi* at the beginning of the fifteenth century. Accolti was assuming a position in this ongoing debate and, indeed, clash of cultures, but it is easy to misunderstand Accolti’s allegiances and antipathies here. Accolti’s sympathies were with his Aretine friend and mentor, Leonardo Bruni, who, although a supporter of the ancients earlier in life (as is clear from his own *Dialogi ad Petrum Paulum Histrum*),<sup>58</sup> had shifted position after his quarrels with Niccolò Niccoli.<sup>59</sup> It is no exaggeration to say that in the 1420s, ’30s and ’40s Florence was divided into two literary

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<sup>55</sup> *BA*, 179–80, 340–41. As chancellor Accolti participated in Luca Pitti’s investiture as a knight on 25 December 1463: Castellani, ed. Ciappelli, 25–26; Ciappelli, *Una famiglia*, 87–88. On 28 August 1459, he prepared a letter of recommendation for the Medicean agent, Ser Giusto Giusti d’Anghiari: see “I *Giornali* di Ser Giusto Giusti d’Anghiari (1437–1482),” ed. Nerida Newbiggin, *Letteratura italiana antica*, 3 (2002), 41–246, at 123.

<sup>56</sup> Vespasiano, 597: “Cominciò in nel tempo ch’egli era in Palagio a comporre.”

<sup>57</sup> *BA*, 184–223.

<sup>58</sup> See David Quint, “Humanism and modernity: a reconsideration of Bruni’s *Dialogues*,” *Renaissance Quarterly*, 38 (1985), 423–45.

<sup>59</sup> For Bruni’s quarrel with Niccoli, see Hans Baron, *The Crisis of the Early Italian Renaissance* (2 vols.; Princeton 1955), II, 572 ff.; *idem*, *The Crisis of the Early Italian Renaissance*, rev. ed. (Princeton, 1966), 530, n. 61.

camps: one, headed by Bruni, defended the merits of modern times and the Italian vernacular; the other, championed first by Niccoli and then by his close friend Poggio, spurned the vernacular tradition and tended to belittle the achievements of modern professions such as law and scholastic philosophy. Accolti's *Dialogus* was aimed not at Bruni, whom Accolti idolized, but at the likes of Niccoli and Poggio.

Decisive for Accolti had been his deteriorating relationship with Poggio. The starting point had been the Certame, in which Poggio had been one of the adjudicators who insulted the competitors (including Accolti) by refusing to award the laurel crown. Their mutual friend, Girolamo Aliotti, the Aretine Benedictine and humanist, had attempted to bring them together in 1444,<sup>60</sup> but, as has already been seen with Poggio's rebuff of Accolti in 1447, this was to no avail. The situation grew worse in 1450, when Poggio made Accolti, as the defender of law in his *Historia tripartita*, the butt of his abuse against the legal profession.<sup>61</sup> As a vernacular poet and a lawyer, Accolti used his *Dialogus* as a platform to defend modern culture: his opponent is anonymous, but it impossible not to see in him a caricature of the militant classicism represented by Poggio.<sup>62</sup>

<sup>60</sup> *BA*, 51, 66.

<sup>61</sup> *BA*, 79–84.

<sup>62</sup> In *BA*, 185–91, I produced evidence to show that Accolti's *Dialogue* was occasioned by his rivalry with an old Aretine enemy and Greek translator, Francesco Griffolini, who, Accolti hoped, could be prevented from returning to Florence and becoming a protégé of the Medici. This evidence can be summarized as follows: (1) Accolti's dialogue and Griffolini's Chrysostom preface had the same theme, i.e., the quarrel of the ancients and the moderns; (2) they had the same dedicatee, Cosimo de' Medici; (3) they were presented to him at almost the same time (between December 1460 and November 1463); (4) Accolti made strenuous efforts in September 1461, as chancellor and using his legal authority, to ensure that Griffolini was refused a benefice in Florence; and (5) Griffolini's encomium of Cosimo as equal to the most distinguished ancients including Pompey, Cato, Lucullus, Crassus, and Cicero is systematically outdone by Accolti, who praises Cosimo as more god than man (unprecedented among panegyrics of Cosimo during his lifetime, as was first pointed out by Alison Brown, "The Humanist Portrait of Cosimo de' Medici," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, 24 [1961], 186–221, at 186 ff.). This evidence has gone unchallenged except by Riccardo Fubini, who questioned whether "or not there was any real relationship between the two works (and it is impossible to establish which preceded the other)" (review of *BA* in *Journal of Modern History*, 60 [1988], 395–97, at 397). It would be perverse to assume that this evidence represents mere coincidence. The possibility envisaged by Fubini that Accolti's *Dialogue* could have been inspired by Griffolini's preface is implausible. It must be wondered how Griffolini could have seen a copy of Accolti's work. The only times he was in

One fundamental feature of Accolti's character was his deep religious faith. His love poetry is filled with passionate Christian sentiments; indeed, he interrupted his adaptation of Cicero's *Disputationes tuscularanae* to insert Christian expostulations, and similarly in the *capitolo* on friendship he put aside the classical source, Cicero's *De amicitia*, in order to declare that friendship was the gift of God, who did not deny man grace despite his sins. Moreover, this poem ends with an affirmation of the Trinity and of the Catholic faith. Accolti's final poem is addressed to the Virgin, underlining orthodox doctrines such as the virgin birth, the Immaculate Conception, and the Virgin's powers of intercession with the Son and the Father. The entire poem is in fact a personal prayer to the Virgin, explicitly affirming that worldly success had made Accolti feel spiritually empty and asking for his own sin of envy to be forgiven.<sup>63</sup>

This religious preoccupation is also evident in Accolti's longest work, the history of the First Crusade, *De bello a christianis contra barbaros gesto*. It has sometimes been believed that growing commercial interests in the East led Florence to oppose efforts to launch a crusade after the fall of Constantinople in 1453. However, as a Christian city headed by a devout Christian in the person of Cosimo de' Medici, Florence could not ignore the call to a crusade of a truly determined pope such as Pius II.<sup>64</sup> Accolti's support for the crusade

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Florence was on the way to and from the Congress of Mantua (the Curia was in Florence from 25 April to 5 May 1459 and then again from 27 to 29 January 1460: ASF, Corporazioni religiose soppresse dal governo francese, 95.212, fols. 155 left and 156), when he enjoyed special dispensation as a member of the Curia temporarily suspending his lifetime exile from Florence, and this was almost a year before the *terminus post quem* of the dialogue (the death of Guarino Veronese on 4 December 1460). There is no possibility that Griffolini's enemy and rival Accolti had sent him the dialogue soon after its composition. Moreover, the rhetorical structure of the two works suggests that Accolti's followed Griffolini's: Griffolini, if he had known Accolti's work, would hardly have given Cosimo lesser praise than Accolti had done. Accolti's dialogue was not widely circulated: the only fifteenth-century manuscript is the presentation copy. On the other hand, Griffolini's text was donated by Cosimo to the "public library" in San Marco, where Accolti would have been able to gain access to it. Finally, there is new evidence in the contrasting praise of the contemporary papacy found in the two texts: see below, note 79.

<sup>63</sup> BA, 68–70.

<sup>64</sup> The new interpretation of Florence's role in the crusade after the fall of Constantinople, first proposed in my article "La storia della prima crociata di Benedetto Accolti e la diplomazia fiorentina rispetto all'Oriente," *Archivio storico italiano*, 131 (1973), 3–25 and subsequently elaborated in BA, 241–59, is accepted by Franco Cardini in his article "La repubblica di Firenze e la crociata di Pio II,"

was more than an official duty; he had a profound personal concern for the plight of Eastern Christianity. He was writing in the tradition of enthusiastic support for pilgrimage and crusade to the holy lands long established in Tuscany and by no means moribund in the fifteenth century. Moreover, there was a circle of ardent crusading enthusiasts in Florence, centering on Agnolo and Donato Acciaiuoli, with whom Accolti can be connected. It was Accolti's hope, so he declared in the preface of his history, that his contemporaries would "wipe out the common blot, which has grown enormously in our time, namely, that the enemies of the Christian religion not only hold His sepulcher but have extended their power far and wide"; he intended to hold up the deeds of the first crusaders to inspire his contemporaries to join a crusade against the Turks.<sup>65</sup>

Religion also played a major role in the *Dialogus*. The sections of the work devoted to the ancient and modern Churches have been especially problematic to interpret; it has proved particularly elusive

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*Rivista di storia della chiesa in Italia*, 23 (1979), 455–82, where some interesting new evidence from the Archivio Niccolini in Florence is cited regarding Otto Niccolini's ambassadorial mission to Rome in the autumn of 1463 (*ibid.*, 477–79). Another Florentine evidently favorable to the crusade was Bernardo di Stoldo Rinieri, who wrote on 25 April 1459 that Pius II "andava a Mantova per far prove di merito contra al turcho": ASF, Corporazioni religiose soppresse dal governo francese, 95.212, fol. 155 left. The Rome branch of the Medici bank in Rome lent Pius II 15,000 florins for his crusade on 19 August 1460: *Calendar of Entries in the Papal Registers relating to Great Britain and Ireland. Papal Letters, vol. XI. A.D. 1455–1464*, ed. J. A. Twemlow (London, 1921), 412–13. Florence put into effect the collection—the thirtieth imposed by Pius II for the crusade—in Arezzo in June and July 1464 (ASA, Provv. 12, fols. 157v–58r); for Arezzo and the crusade under Calixtus III, there are some documents in ASA, Quadernacci del cancelliere, 4, fol. 39v. The Florentine convent of San Pancrazio paid crusading tenths on 20 April 1456, 3 October 1460, and 26 May 1464 (ASF, Corporazioni religiose soppresse dal governo francese, 88.63, fol. 90r). The city of Pistoia was required to contribute 1,000 florins to Pius II's crusade in January and February 1464 (Pistoia, Archivio di stato, Provvisioni 42, fols. 68v–69r, 70v–80r). The commune of San Gimignano contributed 200 florins to Calixtus III's crusading appeal in June 1456 (San Gimignano, Archivio storico, 178 [formerly ser. NN, 124], fols. 382v–83v).

<sup>65</sup> BA, 224 ff., at 237, n. 104: "delerentque communem labem, nostra etate maxime auctam, quod scilicet hostes Christi religionis non modo sepulchrum eius tenent sed longe ac late suum imperium extenderunt." On humanists and the crusade, see now James Hankins, "Renaissance Crusaders: Humanist Crusade Literature in the Age of Mehmed II," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, 49 (1995), 111–207, and Nancy Bisaha, *Creating East and West: Renaissance Humanists and the Ottoman Turks* (Philadelphia, 2004). The presentation copy of Accolti's history, dedicated to Piero de' Medici, is mentioned in the latter's personal inventory of valued possessions: ASF, Mediceo avanti il principato, 163, fol. 66v: "MCCCCLXIII [. . .] Benedicti Aretini de recuperanda yerosolima per Gottifredum licteris antiquis coperta alba—Fl. 5."

to uncover Accolti's personal views behind the rhetorical façade. According to one view, Accolti's own defense of the modern Church in the dialogue was a reply to the earlier anti-clericalism of Bruni and Poggio.<sup>66</sup> While it is possible to argue that Accolti's deep religiosity was repelled by Poggio's hostility to the Church, it is unconvincing to suggest that Accolti had anything but the most profound admiration for his former mentor and fellow Aretine, Bruni.<sup>67</sup> Moreover, it is far from certain that Accolti's personal views were accurately represented by his own remarks in the *Dialogue*. If he had been in fact a defender of papal pomp and magnificence and of clerical wealth, as he portrayed himself in the dialogue, he would have been distancing himself not only from Bruni, but also from the closest members of his own family. His uncle, Antonio Roselli, was the author of a vehemently anti-clerical and anti-papal poem, *Quelli or' veggiam*, which has a notable resemblance to the denunciation of the modern Church by Accolti's opponent in the dialogue. Both distinguish two periods in Christian history, seeing the dividing line as the end of antiquity; both maintain that in the modern Church appointments go to unworthy candidates, to the neglect of the deserving; both argue that modern clergy misgovern Christendom and lead the laity down the path of sin; both contrast the princes of the modern Church, attended by pomp and luxury, with the saints of the primitive Church, who suffered martyrdom and persecution. The failings of the modern Church and particularly the Roman Curia were a family preoccupation, in view of another verse invective, *Tenebrosa, crudel, avara e lorda*, written by Benedetto's brother Francesco "in detestation and censure of the Roman court and of all priests."<sup>68</sup> There are numerous specific points of similarity between Accolti's opponent in the dialogue and Francesco's poem. Both argue that virtue will find no reward in Rome, where gold is all powerful; both argue that the prayers of the Roman Church have no power with God; both maintain that the bad example of the Roman court has extinguished the true light in the minds of Christians; both depict in detail the hedonism and depravity of modern curial life.<sup>69</sup>

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<sup>66</sup> Riccardo Fubini, *L'umanesimo italiano e i suoi storici. Origini rinascimentali – critica moderna* (Milan, 2001), 121–28, 311–12; *idem*, review of *BA*, 397.

<sup>67</sup> On Accolti and Bruni, see *BA*, 49–51, 321.

<sup>68</sup> *BA*, 222.

<sup>69</sup> *BA*, 221–22.



In fact, there is conclusive evidence in the *Dialogus* to reveal Accolti's true feelings about the contemporary Church and, in particular, the papacy and the Curia. It has been suggested that Accolti's work is to be linked with the new positive attitude towards the papacy, celebrating "the recently restored institutional dignity of the Church"<sup>70</sup> following Eugenius IV's and Nicholas V's restoration of Rome as the permanent papal capital after 1443. But this view overlooks one decisive textual feature of the dialogue. Accolti praises by name previous popes from Innocent III (d. 1216) to Alexander V (d. 1410):

And to begin with the Roman popes, you would admit, I think, that Gregory X [d. 1276], who is buried in Arezzo, Celestine [V, ab. 1294, d. 1296], Urban V [d. 1370], who found the heads of the Apostles, and Alexander [V, d. 1410], who was created pope at Pisa, were holy and innocent men, as well as endowed with not a little learning. Nor do I think too that Innocent [IV, d. 1254], who wrote a commentary on canon law, Gregory [IX, d. 1241], who collected the Decretals in one volume, Boniface [VIII, d. 1303], who compiled the Sixth Book of Decretals [the Sext], and Benedict XI [d. 1304] ought to be passed over; even if they were not notable for the sanctity of their lives, nevertheless they were good men and excellent in governing the Church, and it is acknowledged that they possessed great knowledge of Latin literature.<sup>71</sup>

However, not only does Accolti admit that the latter four popes were lacking in sanctity, but he omits all mention as well of subsequent fifteenth-century popes from Martin V to Calixtus III.<sup>72</sup> This is in

<sup>70</sup> Riccardo Fubini, review of *BA*, 397.

<sup>71</sup> *Dialogus*, 126: "Et ut a Pontificibus Romanis initium sumam; fatebaris, ut opinor, Gregorium decimum [ob. 1276], qui Arretii sepultus est, Coelestinum [V, ab. 1294, ob. 1296], Urbanum Quintum [ob. 1370], qui Apostolorum capita repperit, Alexandrum [V, ob. 1410], qui Pisis Pontifex creatus est, fuisse viros sanctos et innocentes, et non parva eruditione praeditos. Nec etiam Innocentium [IV, ob. 1254], qui super Iure Pontificio commentum edidit, Gregorium illum [IX, ob. 1241], qui Decretales Epistolas in unum rededit volumen, Bonifatium [VIII, ob. 1303], qui Sextum Sacrorum Canonum librum edidit, et Benedictum undecimum [ob. 1304] praetereundos censeo; qui etsi haudquaquam multa vitae sanctitate fuerunt celebres, tamen bonos illos fuisse, et in regenda Ecclesia praestantissimos, et literarum peritissimos memoriae proditum est." Cf. Florence Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana Pl. 54.8, fol. 51r-v.

<sup>72</sup> This omission is a direct allusion to the praise of the contemporary papacy made by Griffolini, who had singled out Martin V, Nicholas V, and Pius II for explicit praise. BNCF, Conventi Sopressi, J.6.7, fol. 2r-v: "Quid nam de Martino quinto dicam qui cum primum ad summum est pontificatum assumptus imbellicum et variis casibus agitatae ecclesiae statum et diuturnum schisma ita sedavit, ita in

marked contrast to other contemporary princes of the Church (e.g. Cardinal Cesarini, d. 1444) or recent religious figures (e.g. Bernardino of Siena, d. 1444), who are liberally celebrated in the dialogue.<sup>73</sup> There is no doubt that Accolti bore a personal grudge against the modern papacy, occasioned by his failure to win a place in the Curia. Accolti's own sympathies were the same as his brother's and uncle's, both preeminent canonists but similarly slighted by recent popes.<sup>74</sup> Indeed, Accolti's opponent vilifies the Curia's corrupt appointment practices:

I know of many extremely learned men in our time, who have endeavored in every way, except with money, but who have found either a lowly post in the Curia, or none at all. On the other hand, if there have been or are sycophants, exhibitionists, panderers and perpetrators of crime, or simoniacs, they have been embraced avariciously; they have won benefices, honors, and offices.<sup>75</sup>

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unum corpus redegit, ut ex maximis perturbationibus et procellis in tranquillissimum portum tanti gubernatoris peritia periclitantum Petri naviculam appulerit? Quid ad clarissimum principem Nicolao quinto defuit? Cuius tempora etsi brevissima quantulacumque tamen in hac nostra inferiori Italia Augusti paci contulerim. Cuius ductu et auspicio ut urbs Roma ita et romana lingua renovata est. Quem nisi tam repente invida mors e medio substulisset, non minus quam Augustus urbem e lateritia marmoream reliquisset gloriari potuisset. Quid Pio secundo pietate par? Vere inquam pio qui ut commisse sibi ecclesiae et christianae religioni consuleret invalido et imbecillo corpore nullum recusavit laborem." ("What shall I say of Martin V, who on his accession to the pontificate found the condition of the Church weakened and disturbed by various misfortunes? He settled the long-standing schism and reunited the Church into one body, guiding the endangered ship of Peter in the most tranquil harbour out of the greatest disorders and tempests with the skill of a considerable pilot. What was lacking in Nicholas V in comparison with the most distinguished prince? Even though his pontificate was brief, nevertheless in Italy he re-established the peace of Augustus, and under his auspices and through his leadership the city of Rome and the Roman language were renewed. Even if unwelcome death had not suddenly removed him in the midst of his work, one could boast that he, no less than Augustus, transformed the city from brick to marble. What is equal to the piety of Pius II? Truly I say 'pious' of a man who has refused no labor with his infirm and weak body in order to care for the Church and the Christian religion entrusted to him.") See *BA*, 206–7.

<sup>73</sup> *Dialogus*, 126–27. Cf. Florence, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, Pl. 54.8, fols. 52r–53v.

<sup>74</sup> For Antonio Roselli's falling out with Eugenius IV, see J. H. Burns, "The 'Monarchia' of Antonio Roselli (1380–1466): text, context and controversy," in *Monumenta iuris canonici*. Series C: Subsidia, vol. 9, 321–54, at 337. In his long career, Francesco Accolti never worked for the papacy, and eventually produced a renowned, violently anti-papal *consilium* on behalf of Lorenzo de' Medici in the aftermath of the Pazzi Conspiracy.

<sup>75</sup> *Dialogus*, 109: "Novi ego plures nostra aetate viros doctissimos, qui cum omni conatu, praeter quam pecuniis, niterentur; nullum aut exiguum in curia locum invenerunt. Contra vero si qui fuerunt, vel sunt, adultores, mimi, lenones at scelorum

This charge is never answered in the *Dialogue*, and it is obvious that here Accolti's opponent was giving vent to the resentment that he himself had nurtured ever since his own rejection by the Curia in 1447.

It is interesting to note the resemblances between Accolti's *Dialogue* and an earlier text ostensibly written in praise of the contemporary Church. Lapo da Castiglionchio's *De curiae commodis dialogus*, completed in 1438, had suggested that, whereas poverty had suited the early Church, the modern Church needed wealth. Christ had to be poor, Lapo argued, in order to convince the world of his own divinity, because in that materialistic age a rich man would have gone unnoticed. Moreover, Christ had to confute extremely learned opponents, but since reason and argument were inadequate, he had to resort to miracles, which must have seemed all the more wonderful when invoked by a man without social background or position. However, not all periods in history were the same. The Church, well established in Lapo's time, needed wealth, living as he did in an age that admired riches and despised poverty. How ridiculous it would be to see the pope riding a donkey!<sup>76</sup> Similarly Accolti wrote that poverty might have been appropriate to the primitive Church, but riches and luxury were needed by modern clergy to maintain the respect of the people; cardinals and popes as princes of the Church needed magnificence to make their authority effective.<sup>77</sup> There

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ministri, vel pecunias offerentes, hos cupidissimi receperunt; illis beneficia, illis honores, illis officia concedunt." Cf. Florence, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, Pl. 54.8, fol. 11v.

<sup>76</sup> Ed. Christopher S. Celenza, *Renaissance Humanism and the Papal Curia. Lapo da Castiglionchio the Younger's De curiae commodis* (Ann Arbor, 1999), 191–219.

<sup>77</sup> *Dialogue*, 123–27 (cf. Florence, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, Pl. 54.8, fols. 45r–55r), particularly 126 (cf. Florence, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, Pl. 54.8, fols. 52v–53r). It is possible that Accolti was familiar with Lapo's work. Their mutual friend, Girolamo Aliotti, sent a copy of the text to Domenico Capranica in 1454 (Celenza, *Renaissance Humanism*, 25; R. Fubini, "Lapo da Castiglionchio, detto il Giovane," *Dizionario biografico degli italiani*, XXII [1979], 48), and there are passages which reveal a similarity of argument, if not of wording:

Lapo, ed. Celenza, 218: Tantos spiritus, tantum fastidium, tantam insolentiam atque intolerantiam, quantam in plerisque curiae principibus video, probare aut etiam animo aequo ferre nullo modo possum. Sunt enim primum incesso ac reliquo omni gestu motuque corporis elati et tumidi . . . arrogantes in sermonibus ac contentiosi in sententia . . .

*Dialogue*, 109: Intueri licet . . . Curiam denique totam . . . cum omni pompa, servis plurimis stipatos incedere; nihil denique aliud quaerere, nisi quemadmodum cuncti eos timeant, ac ut Deos venerentur. (Cf. Florence, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, Pl. 54.8, fol. 11r–v)

is also a more subtle similarity between the two works. Lapo's dialogue is widely acknowledged to be an ironic defense of the contemporary Curia, providing, on the contrary, ample proof of its corruption.<sup>78</sup> It must be wondered whether Accolti's own concealed (and ironic) critique of the Curia was to some extent modeled on Lapo's earlier disguised vilification of curial decadence. It is clear that both texts expound a number of similar critical themes, including curial materialism and corrupt appointment practices.

The genuine religious voice of Accolti in the dialogue was complex: he saw much to praise in the modern Church, especially its scholarship, its legal achievements, its genuine saints and holy figures. But for him and his family, the papacy from Martin V to Calixtus III was anathema. Accolti was far from joining ranks with contemporary curialists, such as Griffolini, as defenders of the modern papacy. On the contrary, Accolti made common cause with his idol Bruni in rejecting the radical classicism which had become the hallmark of the papal secretariat after the Schism. What Accolti opposed in his dialogue was not the earlier Florentine anti-clericalism of Bruni and Poggio, but rather the arch-classicism of the contemporary papacy, embodied by papal curialists such as Griffolini and Poggio, a cultural predilection which had spurned both him and his family.<sup>79</sup>

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Lapo, ed. Celenza, 214: Quis enim his temporibus est tam religiosus, tam sanctus, tam a vulgi opinione abhorrens, qui pontificem humili veste, paucis comitibus et iis quidem sordidis et nudis pedibus incedentem vel asello insidentem more priscorum patrum non dico venerari atque adorare velit, sed adire aut alloqui? Quis qui pontificis nomine et honore dignum putet, qui non risu praetereuntem cavillisque prosequatur?

<sup>78</sup> Fubini, "Lapo," 49; Celenza, *Renaissance Humanism*, 23–85 *passim*; D. Rundle, review article of Celenza, in *Bulletin of the Society for Renaissance Studies*, 18:1 (October, 2000), 22–23.

<sup>79</sup> It is possible that Accolti disguised his opinion of the Curia in order to avoid offending Pius II, with whom he may have hoped to achieve a personal rapprochement on the basis of their mutual enthusiasm for the crusade, and also in order not to prejudice the diplomatic rapprochement between Florence and the papacy, which he was trying to forge through a mutually favorable policy with regard to the crusade against Mehmed II: he would not have wished to jeopardize Cosimo de' Medici's anti-Venetian, pro-papal diplomacy. See *BA*, 255–59 and 277–85. A puzzling document has come to light regarding Accolti's Florentine citizenship. In *BA* (330) I wrote that when "on 7 October 1458 his salary as chan-

*Dialogus*, 126: Neque hi, quanquam servis et familiaribus multis comitati incederent, vel insolentiae vel vanitatis arguendi sunt. Quid enim ab illis fuit remotius? Sed cum Cardinales, post Pontificem, Ecclesiae principes habeantur; recte institutum censeo, tali pompa ab hominibus conspici; quo apud cunctos augustiores et maioris auctoritatis viderentur. (Cf. Florence, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, Pl. 54.8, fol. 52v)

So how to sum up a portrait of Benedetto Accolti? Aretine patriot; loyal and proud representative of an old Aretine family; beneficiary of and luminary in Arezzo's long and powerful tradition of learning; distinguished lawyer by profession but humanist and writer by calling; successful reforming chancellor of Florence; a man endowed with high intellectual ability and particularly with a remarkable memory; a character of equable disposition who hated polemics, political or intellectual; a masterful rhetorician, able to disguise his anti-papalism and anti-curialism, even from some modern scholarship; but above all else, an individual of deep Christian faith, repelled by the corruption and intellectual extremism of the contemporary Curia.

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cellor was increased from 300 to 450 florins, he was referred to as only 'dominus Benedictus olim domini Michaelis de Accoltis'. But on 20 February 1459 when he was reelected chancellor he was called 'dominus Benedictus domini Michaelis de Accolti de Arezio Civis Florentinus'.<sup>1</sup> I concluded that "he received Florentine citizenship sometime between October 1458 and February 1459." However, I have since discovered the following document: (ASF Dono Panciatichi 184, cassetta I, n. 4) "In domo habitationis egregii utriusque iuris doctoris Domini Benedicti Domini Michaelis de Acoltis de Aretio iudicis et advocati et civis florentini posita Florentie in populo Sancte Margarite sub anno domini ab eius incarnatione millesimo quatuorcentesimo quinquagesimo septimo [...] die tertia septembris." This document implies that by 3 September 1457 Accolti had become a Florentine citizen. If that were the case, then he should thereafter have paid the Catasto in the city of Florence; instead, he paid the Catasto of 1458 in Arezzo (*BA*, 330, n. 1). It is possible that the notary who recorded the 1457 document erred, assuming that a prominent Florentine lawyer such as Accolti was a Florentine citizen too.



## CHAPTER FOUR

### POSSESSING ANTIQUITY: AGENCY AND SOCIABILITY IN BUILDING LORENZO DE' MEDICI'S GEM COLLECTION

Melissa Meriam Bullard

Beginning in the fifteenth century Renaissance collectors took particular delight in antique gems, coins, medals, and sculpture fragments, and they basked in the honor that accrued from possessing desired and beautiful remnants from the distant, mainly Roman past.<sup>1</sup> A fine collection gave evidence of an owner's cultivated and discriminating taste and, like the ability to read and write classical Latin and Greek, served as a cultural marker of the educated elite. Individual pieces became objects of study and topics of conversation and correspondence among connoisseurs, who also exchanged them as tokens of friendship and diplomacy. Like his father Piero before him, Lorenzo de' Medici became a serious, if eclectic collector, seemingly motivated in large part by the personal pleasure he took in surrounding himself with rare and beautiful things for his own and others' enjoyment. As one of his most knowledgeable agents in Rome, ser Luigi Lotti, noted laconically, "Lorenzo delights in rare objects."<sup>2</sup> By the time of his death Lorenzo had established himself as one of the premier collectors of his day, as attested by the massive 1492 inventory of hundreds of precious objects in his *tesoro* kept in his *studiolo* at the Medici palace.<sup>3</sup> Niccolo Valori echoed Lotti's observation in his early biography when he noted that Lorenzo was more obsessed by his love of antiquity than by anything else.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> I wish to thank Professors John Headley and Kate Lowe for reading and making helpful suggestions for this essay.

<sup>2</sup> "Perché so Lorenzo sì dilecta di cose rare . . ." in Tammara De Marinis and Alessandro Perosa, *Nuovi documenti per la storia del Rinascimento* (Florence, 1970), 61.

<sup>3</sup> *Libro d'inventario dei beni di Lorenzo il Magnifico*, ed. Marco Spallanzani and Giovanni Gaeta Bertelà (Florence, 1992), 34–57.

<sup>4</sup> "Fuit certe Laurentius adeo vetustatis amator, ut nulla re magis caperetur," *Vita di Lorenzo de' Medici*, ed. Enrico Niccolini (Vicenza, 1991), 53.

In the fifteenth century antiquities were not museum pieces, lying in passive repose in a case or on a shelf. Rather, they enjoyed a more active, lived, cultural role in the domestic spaces of their owners. Fragments of ancient sculptures and bronze or marble plaquettes sporting favorite antique devices decorated the interiors of private palaces. Personal hoards of ancient gems, medals and coins, a considerable financial investment in themselves, gave pleasure and inspired awe. Lorenzo regularly used his antiquities for show and for diplomatic purposes to impress important visitors to Florence. Such assemblages of antiquities have been aptly characterized among Renaissance “objects of virtue,” because they were esteemed not only for their rarity, craftsmanship, and value, but also because owning such objects was believed to bestow honor and status. And because collectors selected their treasures deliberately and carefully, by affinity, antiquities came to embody something of the moral character of their owners.<sup>5</sup>

The “virtuous” aspect of art and antiquities in the Renaissance has only lately received attention by scholars sensitive to the domestic surroundings in which these objects functioned. Interest in the archaeology of knowledge, material culture, and the art market has opened new areas of inquiry regarding historical objects and how they functioned in multiple contexts of early modern life.<sup>6</sup> Most of the early foundational studies of antiquities in the Renaissance have been less context- and more object-centered, characteristically composed of learned inventories or exhibition catalogs, such as the important study of Lorenzo de’ Medici’s *tesoro*, which grouped objects by type such as hardstone vases, gems with Lorenzo de’ Medici’s initials,

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<sup>5</sup> Luke Syson and Dora Thornton, *Objects of Virtue* (London, 2001), 7; also Dora Thornton, *The Scholar in his Study: Ownership and Experience in Renaissance Italy* (New Haven, 1997).

<sup>6</sup> Leonard Barkan, *Unearthing the Past: Archaeology and Aesthetics in the Making of Renaissance Culture* (New Haven, 1999); Sabine Forero-Mendoza, *Le temps des Ruines. L'éveil de la conscience historique à la Renaissance* (Seyssel, 2002); Roberto Weiss, *The Renaissance Discovery of Classical Antiquity*, 2nd ed. (Oxford, 1988); Francis Haskell and Nicholas Penny, *Taste and the Antique: The Lure of Classical Sculpture, 1500–1900* (New Haven, 1981); Annette Haugh, “Constituting the Past-Forming the Present. The Role of Material Culture in the Augustan Period,” *Journal of the History of Collections* [hereafter *JHC*], 13 (2001), 111–23; Marcello Fantoni, Louisa C. Matthew, and Sara F. Matthews-Grieco (eds.), *The Art Market in Italy (15th–17th Centuries)* (Modena, 2003); Richard A. Goldthwaite, “L’economia del collezionismo,” in *L’Età di Rubens: Dimore, committenti e collezionisti genovesi*, ed. Piero Boccardo (Milan, 2004), 13–21.



those without his initials etc. Such basic studies have had as their goal to establish the contents of various collections, now mostly dispersed, and to identify, list, and date objects and, where possible, trace the provenance and subsequent fortunes of individual pieces.<sup>7</sup> Such an approach has had the unintended effect of stripping Renaissance antiquities of much of their contemporary historical context. The following discussion seeks to restore elements of the lived experiences surrounding some of the precious antiquities in Lorenzo de' Medici's collection.

Small artifacts such as Roman or Hellenistic gems, medals, and coins held particular fascination and satisfied the passions for the antique so fundamental to fifteenth-century culture more readily than bulkier sculpture or architectural fragments. Like jewels and plate, ancient gems, medals, and coins had the added advantage of being highly portable and fungible carriers of wealth that in times of need could be readily converted into cash. Because of their desirability, prized pieces became transitory guests in someone's collection, eventually on their way elsewhere. For example, some of the rare antique gems which Cardinal Trevisan had owned in the early fifteenth century, entered Pope Paul II's famous collection, were acquired by Lorenzo de' Medici in the 1470s and 1480s, and eventually passed into the Farnese collection in the mid sixteenth century. Such transfers usually occurred, however, only upon the deaths of their previous owners, making well-known items hard to acquire.

Aesthetically, connoisseurs prized these small treasures for their skillful craftsmanship, historical information from inscriptions, and allegorical fantasy. Rare and precious ancient gems, while offering the potential for serious study by learned cognoscenti, more often found use in the academy of words as conversation pieces and objects for admiration and display to select guests in the intimacy of one's study or when worn about one's person. They served as tangible nodes for what Peter Miller has termed the "learned sociability" of the day.<sup>8</sup> Important visitors to Florence came to expect a tour of

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<sup>7</sup> Nicole Dacos, Antonio Giuliano, and Ulrico Pannuti (eds.), *Il Tesoro di Lorenzo il Magnifico, Repertorio delle gemme e dei vasi* (Florence, 1980); Phyllis Pray Bober and Ruth Rubinstein, *Renaissance Artists and Antique Sculpture: A Handbook of Sources* (Oxford, 1986); Wendy Stedman Sheard, *Antiquity in the Renaissance* (Northampton, Mass., 1979).

<sup>8</sup> In his *Peiresc's Europe. Learning and Virtue in the Seventeenth Century* (New Haven,

Lorenzo's *studiolo* crammed with bronzes, marbles, hardstone vases, coins, and cameos. The humanist cardinal Ermolao Barbaro, who had stopped there in 1490, had been particularly taken by the historical inscriptions on Lorenzo's coins and medals when given an after-dinner tour, by then a customary part of hospitality shown to passing dignitaries.<sup>9</sup> Antiquities also made excellent diplomatic gifts and tokens of esteem, such as the two marble heads of Augustus and Agrippa that Lorenzo received as a gift from Sixtus IV during his 1471 embassy to Rome.<sup>10</sup>

Part of the allure of ancient objects lay in the fact that they constituted tangible remnants of a distant past that spoke directly and across time to their new owners. They also seemed to speak to the present in a visual language that was at once historical and allegorical. Inscriptions and portraits on the faces of coins and medals might tell of Roman emperors and their reigns, while the allegorical figures on their reverse spoke a more hidden language of mythology. Not all ancient allegories were crystal clear, which added to their fascination as conversation pieces. Pannuti's discussion of the Tazza Farnese lists numerous attempts to unlock the allegory of the figures carved into the cup, running from the apotheosis of Alexander The Great, Cleopatra, the return of the emperor Trajan from Germany,

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2000), Peter Miller views sociability as "a collective enterprise" (17) in which the role of friendship and conversation and letter writing were essential. Inspired by Roman neo-Stoicism, it engaged "a practice of moral excellence that complemented the life of learning" (50) and facilitated bonds "between the unrelated, unconstrained and unequal members of modern society" (56), bonds which formed the basis of civil society.

<sup>9</sup> The most learned humanists of Florence, Marsilio Ficino, Angelo Poliziano, Giovanni Pico della Mirandola, and Bernardo Rucellai, were among the dinner guests. Barbaro took great pleasure in all the medals, cameos, and vases, even the garden. Although he didn't seem to know that much about sculpture, he was fascinated by the inscriptions (*storie*) on Lorenzo's ancient medals, *Archivio di Stato di Firenze* [hereafter ASF], *Mediceo avanti il Principato* [hereafter MAP], 42, 59. The passage was first published in Angelo Fabroni, *Laurentii Medicis Magnifici vita* (2 vols. in 1; Pisa, 1784), II, 377–79. Barbaro was on his way to Rome as Venetian ambassador. For the detailed description of Giovanni d'Aragona's 1480 tour, Syson and Thornton, *Objects*, 81–82.

<sup>10</sup> On the circulation of ancient coins and medals, see John Cunnally, "Ancient Coins as Gifts and Tokens of Friendship during the Renaissance," *JHC*, 6 (1994), 129–43; also, the articles in *Italian Medals*, ed. J. Graham Pollard, vol. 21 of *Studies in the History of Art* (Washington, D.C., 1987).

and the greatness of Rhodes, to the fertility of the Nile.<sup>11</sup> Early collectors like Cardinal Trevisan had apparently kept some of his precious coins and gems in little cloth sacks, but given the double-sided nature of these ancient collectibles in both a physical as well as figurative sense, later collectors like Paul II, Barbara Gonzaga, and the Venetian jeweler and antiquarian, Domenico di Piero were known to have mounted their coins, medals, and cameos in trays or tablets so that both sides might be admired more easily, and in the case of their translucent gems, so that the light could show them to their best advantage.<sup>12</sup> Contemporary portraits depict both men and women wearing antique gems or copies as jewelry, usually as a necklace or pinned to a hat. The 1492 inventory of Lorenzo's treasure describes most of his gems set in gold (*legato in oro*), and we know of at least one case in which he proudly exhibited a newly purchased cameo he had had encircled in gold and suspended on a chain.<sup>13</sup>

An important aspect of the growing appetite for antiquities in the Renaissance concerns the processes and agency involved in their acquisition. Most collecting involved considerable collaborative effort, an aspect symbolized by the figure of the learned antiquarian advisor for the seventeenth century, but mostly overlooked for prior periods when the agents used by early collectors were mostly personal acquaintances, not professional dealers.<sup>14</sup> The fifteenth century saw a burgeoning trade in antiquities in places like Rome and Naples

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<sup>11</sup> Ulrico Pannuti, "Catalogo delle gemme che non recano l'iscrizione NAV. R. MED. Ma provenienti dal tesoro di Lorenzo de' Medici," in Dacos et al. (eds.), *Il Tesoro di Lorenzo il Magnifico*, 69–81, at 69–70.

<sup>12</sup> Xavier F. Salomon, "Cardinal Pietro Barbo's collection and its inventory reconsidered," *JHC*, 15 (2003), 1–18, at 11; Marilyn Perry, "Wealth, Art, and Display: the Grimani Cameos in Renaissance Venice," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* [hereafter *JWCI*], 56 (1993), 268–74, at 271; Clifford M. Brown, "The Farnese Family and the Barbara Gonzaga Collection of Antique Cameos," *JHC*, 6 (1994), 145–51, at 146.

<sup>13</sup> *Libro d'inventario dei beni di Lorenzo il Magnifico*, ed. Marco Spallanzani and Giovanna Gaeta Bertelà (Florence, 1992), 36–40. "Ma tornando qua, uno mercatante romano . . . che ha veduto quella corniola, dice che la vide legare in uno filo d'oro et che Lorenzo non harebbe lasciata per 500 ducati . . .," Biblioteca Nazionale Firenze [hereafter BNF], Ginori Conti [hereafter GC], 29, 83, fol. 39.

<sup>14</sup> On collaboration in Medici patronage, see my "Heroes and Their Workshops: Medici Patronage and the Problem of Shared Agency," *Journal of Medieval and Renaissance Studies*, 24 (1994), 179–98; reprinted as chap. 4 in my *Lorenzo il Magnifico: Image and Anxiety, Politics and Finance* (Florence, 1994), 109–30.

where fresh materials were still being unearthed and in Venice which had a commercial pipeline to the treasures of Byzantium. Although hardly a commodities market in the sense of items being openly and publicly offered for sale, as they would be in the *banchi* in the Campo de' Fiori that Isabella d'Este perused in the early sixteenth century or in the stalls on the Rialto bridge that later collectors frequented, rare and desirable antiquities changed hands through private channels.<sup>15</sup> Eager buyers found sellers via intermediaries. Lorenzo used his secretaries, friends, bank agents, notaries, humanists, artists, ambassadors, friendly *condottieri*, and even his son-in-law as intermediaries in his quest for the best and most beautiful antiquities. Medici agents often pre-selected objects and sent them by trusted courier to Florence for Lorenzo's final approval. In making purchases, he relied on the advice of persons as intimate to him as his private secretary Niccolò Michelozzi or as removed as the Venetian jeweler/antiquarian Domenico di Piero, who certainly knew of Lorenzo as a leading collector, but who probably had never met him personally. Domenico di Piero and a Roman, Giovanni Ciampolino, with whom Lorenzo's agents had numerous dealings in the 1480s, stand out as proto-professional dealers in that they were very knowledgeable collectors themselves who gave expert advice and who sometimes sold items from their private hoards, or, as in the case of Ciampolino, also sought newly discovered antiquities for special clients like Lorenzo.<sup>16</sup> The following discussion focuses on the collaborative enterprise of building Lorenzo's gem collection in the context of surrounding events. It suggests that in the course of locating, discerning, and recommending or not recommending certain pieces to Lorenzo, the various friends, agents and acquaintances in his circle not only had opportunity to exercise their own discriminating tastes but helped solidify common cultural interests in a process that resembled on a more modest scale, but

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<sup>15</sup> Martha A. McCrory, "Domenico Compagni: Roman Medalist and Antiquities Dealer of the Cinquecento," in Pollard (ed.), *Italian Medals*, 116; Evelyn Welch, "From Retail to Resale: Artistic Value and the Second-Hand Market in Italy (1400–1550)," in Fantoni et al. (eds.), *Art Market*, 284.

<sup>16</sup> Perry, "Wealth, Art, and Display," 271 and nn.; Adolfo Venturi, *L'arte ferrarese nel periodo di Ercole d'Este* (Bologna, 1890), 24–26; Laurie Fusco and Gino Corti, "Giovanni Ciampolini (d. 1505), A Renaissance Dealer in Rome and his Collection of Antiquities," *Xenia*, 21 (1991), 7–46. Fusco and Corti's long-awaited study of Lorenzo de' Medici's antique collection will add considerably to our knowledge of his various agents.

perhaps helped lay the foundation for, the kind of Republic of Letters associated with antiquarian sodalities in the seventeenth century.<sup>17</sup>

The middlemen Lorenzo used were knowledgeable about antiquities, judging from the discerning comments in their letters. Nofri Tornabuoni, vice-director of the Medici bank in Rome, who handled, among many other things, the finances for Lorenzo's Roman acquisitions, had a very good eye. For example, he described the engraving on a certain cornelian he had examined for Lorenzo as "very graceful and artfully done, and which truly you will want to possess."<sup>18</sup> Ser Luigi Lotti, the Florentine notary associated with the Medici bank in Rome and Lorenzo's most active intermediary and who was a good friend of Giovanni Ciampolino, wrote lengthy descriptions of prospective acquisitions to both Lorenzo and to his secretary Michelozzi.<sup>19</sup> He even made artistic recommendations regarding how a broken gem might be mounted and the missing part filled with gold.<sup>20</sup> Michelozzi, the main recipient of correspondence about Lorenzo's purchases, was obviously sufficiently informed about issues of quality to discuss them with Lorenzo. Though a man of more modest means, Michelozzi purchased art for himself and had instructed ser Luigi to be on the lookout for small items of good quality that he could afford—in one instance a signet ring, although for practical usability, he preferred something modern to the antique.<sup>21</sup> In a gesture of friendship Ser Luigi had sent a beautiful antique gem he

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<sup>17</sup> Peter Miller in *Peiresc's Europe* has ably characterized the seventeenth-century world of the erudite polymath and his network of friends and learned acquaintances. Peiresc maintained an extensive collection of impressions of notable antique gems: see David Jaffe, "The Barberini Circle. Some Exchanges between Peiresc, Rubens, and their Contemporaries," *JHC*, 1 (1989), 119–47, at 129.

<sup>18</sup> ASF, MAP, 42, 85: "molto gentile et artificioso, et [che] veramente avete ragione di volere."

<sup>19</sup> For example, "La corniola, come vedrete, dico senza lo intagl[i]o, è bellissima, et credo che tucto satisfarà a Lorenzo, maxime che se ne intende. A me pareva cosa artificiosissima, ma più che questo la haveva che è intendentissimo et al iudicio del quale *omnes in similibus se referent*, m' à mostro *singularum particularum artificium et difficultatem*, mi pare ancora più mirabile. Bisogna considerare *singulariter omnia*, et si vedrà che mano et che ochio et ragioine hebbe lo artifice. In somma ogni intendente la giudica cosa mirabile et crede che Lorenzo non habia intagl[i]o dove sia tante cose et così perfectamente finite," in De Marinis and A. Perosa, *Nuovi Documenti*, 60.

<sup>20</sup> BNF, GC, 29, 83, fol. 34.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, fol. 35.

thought Michelozzi might like even though it was broken.<sup>22</sup> It wasn't always easy to tell an antique gem from a modern fake, and on questions of authenticity and quality, Nofri Tornabuoni sometimes sought the opinions of Florentine artists working in Rome, notably Giuliano da San Gallo, Filippino Lippi, and the architect Baccio Pontelli, being those named specifically in the correspondence.<sup>23</sup>

High-quality ancient gems usually had to be coaxed away from their owners often with difficulty or purchased from an estate. Once in the hands of a dedicated collector like Paul II or Lorenzo de' Medici, they tended to stay put during the new owner's lifetime, which probably increased the sales value of similar objects since they became available so rarely. In such a trade characterized by scarcity—where demand for rare antiquities was on the rise, where known pieces were hoarded by their owners, and new supplies were few, sporadic, and unpredictable—well-connected friends and agents played an essential role in wheedling and convincing someone like Domenico di Piero or Giovanni Ciampolino to part with his treasures. In the case of the beautiful cornelian depicting Phaëthon's chariot that Ciampolino sold Lorenzo, it took months of persuasion by agents of the Medici bank to get the reluctant Roman to part with it. In their frustration, Lorenzo's contacts labeled the recalcitrant antiquarian an ill-intentioned (*tristo*), bizarre (*fantastico*) man and a person with whom it was necessary to play more games than with a monkey to pry the cornelian from his grasp.<sup>24</sup> In consolation for his personal loss he caused further delays by insisting on having casts made before he would give it up.<sup>25</sup> In the end, perhaps Ciampolino only sold because he needed the money, for Lotti had described him as being very knowledgeable about antiquities but not a wealthy man.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> "Mi sarà così grato la habiate voi come se l'avessi io," *ibid.*, fol. 34. If Michelozzi decided against it, Lotti wanted it back and made him promise, "vi prego per amicitiam nostrum, excepto Laurentio, . . . non voglate darla a huomo che viva, ma rimandarmela," *ibid.*

<sup>23</sup> For example, ASF, MAP, 61, 114; MAP, 42, 140, also *Protocolli del carteggio di Lorenzo il Magnifico per gli anni 1473-74, 1477-92*, ed. Marcello del Piazzo (Florence, 1956), 394.

<sup>24</sup> ASF, MAP, 39, 440; MAP, 52, 25; "Era bisognato fare più giuochi che una bertuccia inanzi che noi abbiamo possuto cavare da le mani al Cianpolino quella chorniouola di fetonta," MAP, 39, 442. Fusco and Corti have discussed the lengthy negotiations for the gem in "Giovanni Ciampolini," 7-10.

<sup>25</sup> ASF, MAP, 96, 166 and Fusco and Corti, "Giovanni Ciampolini," 8.

<sup>26</sup> ASF, MAP, 39, 80 and Fusco and Corti, "Giovanni Ciampolini," 7.

Running accounts detailing notable feats of patience and skillful persuasion in an acquisition, as in the case of the Phaëthon cornelian, made entertaining reading back in Florence. Ser Lorenzo Lotti had compared a Roman collector, probably someone other than Ciampolino, to an old octopus (*polpo*) who hung onto his gems with incredible tenacity.<sup>27</sup> Other accounts described in humorous detail Ciampolino's escapades including a moonlight excavation financed by the Medici bank to remove antique statues from a convent vineyard before a powerful competitor, Cardinal Giuliano della Rovere, could get his hands on them.<sup>28</sup> The narratives themselves, reminiscent of Boccaccio's familiar tale of Andreuccio and the dead archbishop's purloined ruby ring, added to the objects' interest and to their new owner's reputation.<sup>29</sup> Success brought honor to agents too. Prior to cinching the sale of the Phaëthon cornelian, Lotti wrote, "The big cornelian is constantly on my mind, because I want the honor [of having gotten it]."<sup>30</sup> Lively epistolary accounts that read like heroic conquests gave their recipients fodder for entertaining conversation. One can imagine that for Lorenzo and other collectors, part of showing off a special gem to friends and visitors involved recounting how hard it had been to acquire and by what means a trophy piece had been won. Such "big fish" stories and the bragging rights associated with prized objects functioned socially much in the way the poetic encomia Poliziano and other humanists wrote: celebrating Lorenzo's collections worked by association to praise the owner by praising his possessions.

One suspects that some tales of how new troves had been discovered, or how certain antiquities had been obtained through ingenuity and stealth, acquired embroidery for rhetorical effect, sometimes to entertain, sometimes to drive home a point, such as the mean Croesus-like verbal image the Roman humanist Platina painted of Paul II as a person so avid about his collection of antique gems and medals that he stayed up nights admiring and sifting through them.<sup>31</sup>

<sup>27</sup> "Io sono drecto alla traccia per havere una corniola la quale a me piace, ma bisogna usare mille arte perche è in mano d'uno polpo che sapete malvolentieri lascia," BNF, CG 29, 83, fol. 39.

<sup>28</sup> Nofri Tornabuoni's account is in ASF, MAP, 52, 74 and MAP, 40, 199. See also Fusco and Corti, "Giovanni Ciampolini," 9.

<sup>29</sup> Boccaccio, *The Decameron*, 2:5.

<sup>30</sup> "La gran corniola m'è continuamente in memoria, perché ne vorrei pure havere honore," BNF, 29, 83, fol. 35.

<sup>31</sup> Bartolomeo Platina, *Liber de vita Christi ac omnium pontificum*, ed. Giacinto Gaeta

According to Carlo de' Medici's vivid account, the same pope had used physical coercion to snatch a sack of ancient coins away from him.<sup>32</sup> Stories spun out for entertainment or to make an unflattering point, must have contributed to the fascination of ancient collectibles and added to their sociability. Descriptive, colorful stories vested ancient objects with fresh contemporary meaning that allowed them to reflect a distant and admired past while at the same time "speak" to the present in an idiom that anchored them firmly in the lives and social surroundings of their new owners. The antiquities and their associated stories also brought together owners, agents, and multiple admirers and connoisseurs who knew the past and present histories of the objects and who either had seen the items themselves or had familiarity with them through hearsay or through casts and drawings such as Ciampolino had made of the Phaëthon cornelian.

Antiquities also existed in multiple other contexts, often involving political and diplomatic circumstances that reached well beyond the tales of their immediate acquisition and beyond their physical location in a particular domestic setting. An understanding of these wider contexts can restore unrecorded elements of the acquisition "narratives" that contemporaries would have known but which subsequently became lost. Restored contexts also reveal how antiquities themselves could almost become historical actors as in the case of Lorenzo's cornelians from Venice.

The scarcity of information about Lorenzo's many cultural interests in his surviving correspondence obscures not only his activities as a collector, but also the actions of the other individuals to whom he entrusted the scouting and negotiating. Since agents and associates usually handled the purchase of antique objects in the early stages, the paucity of their surviving correspondence further obscures their role. Antique collecting originated in the realm of private, domestic concerns, so we can glimpse a few occasions when Lorenzo was absent from Florence and was writing home to his secretaries about

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(Città di Castello, 1913), 396–97, as cited in Salomon, "Cardinal Pietro Barbo's Collection," 1.

<sup>32</sup> Quoted in Eugène Müntz, *Les Arts à la cour des papes pendant le XV<sup>e</sup> et le XVI<sup>e</sup> siècle* (3 vols.; Paris, 1879), II, 130, and cited in Salomon, "Cardinal Pietro Barbo's Collection," 9.



matters he would normally have discussed with them in person. Our available information comes mainly from letters written to his personal secretary Michelozzi, who emerges as the main figure keeping tabs on various negotiations in progress. Ser Luigi Lotti da Barberino, agent and notary in Rome, usually wrote directly to Michelozzi and much less often to Lorenzo.<sup>33</sup>

The most noted exception to the paucity of direct evidence from Lorenzo himself about his purchases of antiquities comes from his personal *ricordi* of 1471, when at age 22 on an embassy to Rome, he had acquired a trove of antique gems and other objects from Sixtus IV that had been in the estate of Paul II. Lorenzo's 1471 purchases included the famous Tazza Farnese (Figure 4.1), the rare chalcedony cup, carved with mythological scenes inside and out. Previously the "Tazza" may have been part of Frederick II's collection in Southern Italy and was perhaps present in Persia in the mid-fifteenth century where it had been sketched, before cardinal Ludovico Trevisan got it and after him Pietro Barbo (Pope Paul II) before Lorenzo.<sup>34</sup> Lorenzo noted:

In September 1471 I was elected ambassador to Rome for the coronation of Pope Sixtus, where I was very honored, and thus I brought away the two heads of ancient marble depicting Augustus and Agrippa, which Pope Sixtus gave me, and in addition, I obtained our bowl of carved chalcedony with many other cameos and medals which were purchased then, including the chalcedony bowl.<sup>35</sup>

These purchases probably anchored a complex series of financial transactions tied to an agreement with Sixtus IV to have the Medici bank in Rome resume its former role as Depositor General of the Apostolic Chamber and to cover some of Paul II's remaining debts, in exchange for which Lorenzo may have been allowed to obtain the precious gems. The less valuable marble heads would have been

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<sup>33</sup> Most of his letters are in BNF, CG, 83, and several have been published by De Marinis and Perosa. Fusco and Corti have used them extensively.

<sup>34</sup> Pannuti, "Catalogo delle gemme," 70–71; Bober and Rubinstein, *Renaissance Artists and Antique Sculpture*, 104–5; Luigi Beschi suggests that the "Tazza" did not arrive in the West until after 1457 because it is not listed in the inventory of Paul II's possessions in that year, "Le Antichità di Lorenzo il Magnifico. Caratteri e vicende," in *Gli Uffizi, Quattro secoli di una galleria*, ed. Paola Barocchi and Giovanna Ragionieri (2 vols.; Florence, 1983), I, 161–82, at 165–66.

<sup>35</sup> The text was first published in Fabroni, *Laurentii Medicis Magnifici vita*, II, 57–58.



Figure 4.1. *Tazza Farnese*: Nile with other figures. Farnese cup. Sardonyx cameo, Hellenistic, 3d–2d cent. B.C., Naples, Museo Archeologico Nazionale

a diplomatic gift from the new pope.<sup>36</sup> Financial records of the Apostolic Chamber reveal that in the first year of operation under Sixtus IV, the Depository General accumulated deficits totaling more than 100,000 cameral florins.<sup>37</sup> A large chunk of the deficits can be

<sup>36</sup> *Lettere di Lorenzo de' Medici*, ed. Nicolai Rubinstein (11 vols. to date; Florence, 1977–2005), I (1977), ed. Ricardo Fubini, 317n; and Dacos et al. (eds.), *Il Tesoro di Lorenzo il Magnifico*, 153n.

<sup>37</sup> Adolf von Gottlob, *Aus der Camera Apostolica des 15. Jahrhunderts* (Innsbruck, 1889),

attributed to monies the pope spent to outfit a papal fleet under Cardinal Oliviero Carafa, who received at least 72,000 florins for that purpose.<sup>38</sup>

How Lorenzo acquired the second most famous object in his collection of antiquities, the so-called Seal of Nero (*Sigillo di Nerone*; Figure 4.2), involves a more complex story, perhaps one more typical of how prized antiquities changed hands through intermediaries. The beautiful cornelian, now believed to have been crafted by Dioskourides for the Emperor Augustus, depicts in carved relief a triumphant Apollo with lyre, Marsyas tied to a tree, and the young Olympos at Apollo's feet, pleading for the satyr's life. The "Sigillo" was one of the most celebrated and reproduced pieces of ancient art in the Renaissance. The story of Marsyas, who was flayed alive as punishment for his boast to best even Apollo with the beautiful music of his pipe, became a favorite motif in fifteenth-century art, and has been interpreted as a cautionary allegory for the folly of human hubris against the will of the gods, and more recently and more historically as an allegory of the triumph of Augustus (Apollo) over Antony (Marsyas) at Actium.<sup>39</sup> Prior to coming into Lorenzo's collection, the "Sigillo" had had a long history. Briefly, the gem was known in Florence already in the early fifteenth century when the goldsmith Lorenzo Ghiberti recorded fashioning a dragon-shaped gold mounting for it, engraved with Nero's name and titles, perhaps so it could be used as a seal, hence its sobriquet as the *Sigillo di Nerone*. According to Filarete it was acquired in the 1430s by cardinal Lodovico Trevisan, then archbishop of Florence.<sup>40</sup> Following the cardinal's death in 1465 Paul II, who had had Trevisan's will voided, took possession of the "Sigillo," the "Tazza," and many other precious objects, adding them to his own extensive collection of antique gems and coins.<sup>41</sup> The "Sigillo's" known pedigree, its supposed association with the emperor Nero, as well as the quality of the carving, made it an especially desirable target for a collector like Lorenzo.

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172–73, 262; Raymond De Roover, *The Rise and Decline of the Medici Bank 1397–1494* (New York, 1966), 198–99.

<sup>38</sup> Archivio di Stato di Roma, Camerale I, Mandati Camerali, 845, fol. 125v.

<sup>39</sup> Most importantly, Francesco Caglioti and Davide Gasparotto, "Lorenzo Ghiberti, il 'Sigillo di Nerone' e le origini della placchetta 'antiquaria,'" *Prospettiva*, 85 (1997), 2–38; Bober and Rubinstein, *Renaissance Artists and Antique Sculpture*, 74–75; Dacos et al. (eds.), *Il Tesoro di Lorenzo il Magnifico*, 55–57.

<sup>40</sup> See Caglioti and Gasparotto, "Lorenzo Ghiberti," 4 and 25.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, 6.



Figure 4.2. *Sigillo di Nerone*, Hellenistic cameo: Apollo, Olympus, and Marsyas, Naples, Museo Archeologico Nazionale

Until recently the circumstances surrounding Lorenzo's purchase of the "Sigillo" had been unclear. Long assumed to have been bought in Rome, perhaps as one of Lorenzo's 1471 purchases from Paul II's estate, we know now that he only acquired the cornelian in 1487 in Venice from Domenico di Piero, the respected jeweler, expert and dealer in antique coins and gems, who was known to have had some of Paul II's gems in his possession at least by 1486. The story of how

the “Sigillo” was acquired has been pieced together elsewhere.<sup>42</sup> Of interest here is the historical and social context surrounding the purchase, the persons involved in the transaction, the gem’s transport, and its relation to another prized gem in Lorenzo’s collection depicting the Ark of Noah. References to these gems in the Medici correspondence also suggest the multiple contexts in which they functioned, namely how they gave delight to their beholders, became a focus of discussion among their friends, and provided Lorenzo a welcome distraction and relief from other weighty diplomatic and financial concerns. The gems also participated as props in a political and diplomatic drama that unfolded around them in late 1487 that lent them a special kind of agency.

The epistolary context helps illuminate the circumstances in which the “Sigillo” entered Lorenzo’s collection. In September 1487 Lorenzo had departed Florence for several weeks, partly to take bathing treatments for his gout near his villa at Spedaletto outside Volterra and partly, one surmises, to escape having to confront the Milanese ambassador on a tricky diplomatic matter of mutual concern.<sup>43</sup> By virtue of his absence, he corresponded with Michelozzi back in Florence about matters requiring attention. Lorenzo made a brief reference to the cornelian at the very end of a letter to his secretary. The letter itself dealt primarily with Florence’s deteriorating relations with Milan. These had been exacerbated by the perfidy of the Duke of Calabria’s secretary, Bernardino di Bernardo, who had been misrepresenting at the Sforza court conversations he had recently had with Lorenzo. This matter Lorenzo did not want to discuss just yet with the waiting Milanese ambassador in Florence. At the end of the letter Lorenzo switched topics to the matter of one of his agents, Domenico Mati, who some weeks before had abruptly left Venice and was at that time attending his ailing wife in Pistoia. Lorenzo wanted Mati back in Venice to take care of the troublesome, long-pending, and politically sensitive debts still owed to a group of Venetian noblemen after the closing of the Medici bank there in 1480–81. Such were the kinds of worries that pressed in on him, and he lamented, “I don’t have the shoulders to support

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<sup>42</sup> Melissa Meriam Bullard and Nicolai Rubinstein, “Lorenzo de’ Medici’s Acquisition of the *Sigillo di Nerone*,” *JWCI*, 72 (1999), 283–86.

<sup>43</sup> *Lettere di Lorenzo de’ Medici*, XI (2004), ed. Melissa Meriam Bullard, 254–55.

these weighty cares and concerns.”<sup>44</sup> Almost as an afterthought and perhaps to lighten his mood, Lorenzo asked if Michelozzi had heard any news of *mia corniuela da Vinegia*.<sup>45</sup> Had Lorenzo remained in Florence and spoken rather than written Michelozzi, his query about the “Sigillo” and its previous owner would have been lost to posterity.

The identity of Domenico di Piero as the seller comes from a letter ser Luigi Lotti wrote Michelozzi from Rome.<sup>46</sup> Paolantonio Soderini, Florentine ambassador in Venice, functioned as intermediary. Back in Florence, Michelozzi, handling correspondence with Soderini regarding negotiations, kept Lorenzo apprised of progress; in late September he had dispatched a special courier to Venice to fetch the gem.<sup>47</sup> It took another month, however, before the gem actually departed Venice.<sup>48</sup> The exact cause of the delay is unclear. It may have been personal, namely that the Venetian had been having second thoughts about selling; it may have been financial, if he were awaiting his money, since such an important gem could command full payment in advance. There may also have been political dimensions to the delay as discussed below. At the end of October Soderini finally reported everything was in order. He had paid for the “Sigillo” and inspected it carefully, perhaps to assure its authenticity, for he reaffirmed its quality and beauty.<sup>49</sup> Soderini sent Lorenzo two other cameos via the same courier, these on approval.<sup>50</sup> Lorenzo had forty days to decide on the other two gems and either return them or pay a price of 300 ducats.<sup>51</sup> The 1492 Medici inventory values most of the dozens of antique cameos Lorenzo owned at between 100 and 500 florins, compared to the “Sigillo” at 1,000 florins, second only to another intricately carved gem known as the “Ark” of Noah listed at 2,000 florins.<sup>52</sup> The unspecified Venetian

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<sup>44</sup> “Non mi pare havere spalle da questi pesi et charichi,” *ibid.*

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>46</sup> BNF, GC, 29, 83, fol. 46; Bullard and Rubinstein, “Lorenzo de’ Medici’s Acquisition,” 285.

<sup>47</sup> ASF, MAP, 51, 441.

<sup>48</sup> BNF, GC, 29, 105, fol. 11.

<sup>49</sup> “Il sigillo è paghato et è buono e bello quanto sapete,” *ibid.*

<sup>50</sup> “E si manda il sigillo neroniano chon altri 2 chammei che à domandò il nostro Lorenzo,” *ibid.*

<sup>51</sup> “Esamini Lorenzo quello gli piace de’ predetti chammei e quello ne vogla fare, che, si sono presi da il patrone chon promessa o di restituirli in termine di 40 di o di pagharli ducati 300,” *ibid.*

<sup>52</sup> *Libro inventario*, 38.

gems would have been very fine ones but not of the “Sigillo’s” or the “Ark’s” exceptional quality.

Buying expensive antique gems for Lorenzo did not constitute one of Soderini’s official ambassadorial duties. A member of the Florentine elite, a humanist and frequenter of Ficino’s circle, he had been official of the Studio at Pisa where his brother Giovan Vittorio taught law. Another brother, Francesco, was bishop of Volterra and later cardinal.<sup>53</sup> The Francesco Soderini who developed the Mausoleum of Augustus in Rome into an ancient sculpture garden may have been Paolantonio’s grandson, indication that other members of the Soderini family shared a passion and expertise about antiquities.<sup>54</sup> Given Paolantonio’s education and interests, while ambassador to Venice, he would have had ample opportunity to familiarize himself with the fine collections there. This knowledge positioned Soderini to act as Lorenzo’s purchasing agent on the side, an activity he obviously enjoyed, both for its pleasures and for its challenges. He wrote a number of times about his dealings with Domenico di Piero, who apparently needed a good bit of persuading to part with his gems. The ambassador returned on several occasions to the Venetian’s house to view other “belle cose” and sent Lorenzo notations on the new pieces he had seen.<sup>55</sup>

But for some reason relations with Domenico di Piero became problematic. In the weeks that followed, the Venetian refused to allow Soderini to see his gems, despite several attempts and protestations invoking Lorenzo’s name, but all to no avail.<sup>56</sup> Part of the loveliness and value of cornelians lies in the translucency of the quartz, which

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<sup>53</sup> Armando F. Verde, *Lo Studio Fiorentino, 1473–1503* (4 vols. in 7; Florence, 1973), I, 275; Arnaldo Della Torre, *Storia dell’Accademia Platonica di Firenze* (Florence, 1902), 719–20, 726, 732, 806–7. On the Soderini family, see also Paula Clarke, *The Soderini and the Medici: Power and Patronage in Fifteenth-Century Florence* (Oxford, 1991) and K. J. P. Lowe, *Church and Politics in Renaissance Italy: The Life and Career of Cardinal Francesco Soderini (1453–1524)* (Cambridge, 1993). After the exile of the Medici in 1494 Paolantonio became an ardent follower of Savonarola.

<sup>54</sup> Anna Maria Riccomini identified him with Francesco di Tommaso di Paoloantonio whose father had lived in Rome, “A Garden of Statues and Marbles: the Soderini Collection in the Mausoleum of Augustus,” *JWCI*, 58 (1995), 265–84, at 266. My thanks to Kate Lowe for this reference.

<sup>55</sup> “Ho visto molte belle cose di Domenico di Piero, et a Lorenzo se ne mando un pocho di nota chome vederete,” BNF, GC, 29, 105, fol. 17.

<sup>56</sup> “Lui no’ lle vuole monstrare in tempo paino facte altrimenti si sieno. Ho qualche volta destramente sollicitatolo per potervi satisfare interamente,” ASF, MAP, 43, 39.

means they display best in good, natural light. It had been overcast in Venice for a solid month, and according to Domenico his reluctance stemmed from the bad weather because he didn't want Soderini inspecting his gems under less than optimal conditions.<sup>57</sup> Given the sensitive matters Soderini was handling for Lorenzo in Venice at the same time, one suspects there may have been other factors behind Domenico's reluctance. Finally at the end of November Soderini regained access and wrote this time directly to Lorenzo reconfirming that the jeweler still had the gems he had described weeks earlier, and beyond those, yet more very beautiful ones.<sup>58</sup>

In this same letter of 26 November, Soderini mentioned another of Lorenzo's prized gems, known as the "Ark," which he said he would be sending back to Lorenzo by the first trusted courier.<sup>59</sup> The Medici "Ark" (Figure 4.3), presently in the British Museum, was Lorenzo's most treasured cameo, listed in the 1492 inventory at twice the value of the "Sigillo." Believed to have come into the collection of Frederick II perhaps after the sacking of Constantinople in 1204, the carved relief on the cameo is particularly intricate, described in the 1492 inventory as displaying "eight human figures, four male and four female; a pair of lions and horses and other animals; and above, a flying angel."<sup>60</sup>

Only one cameo of the "Ark" is known to have been part of Lorenzo's collection, inherited from his father Piero and which was listed in Piero's 1465 inventory as "uno cammeo legato in oro con l'Arca di Noè et più figure et animali di rilievo."<sup>61</sup> Given Lorenzo's cravings for fine antiquities, there is small likelihood that in the interim he would have given or sold the "Ark" to anyone, including the Venetian jeweler. So what was the "Ark" doing in Soderini's possession in Venice in late 1487? Its presence there and the fact that Soderini was sending it back (*rimandare*) opens the intriguing possibility that Lorenzo had allowed it to go to Venice temporarily on

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<sup>57</sup> "Risponde volerle mostrare un giorno che sia chiaro. Et qui è più d'uno mese non si scoperse mai sole, et la vernata ci si scuopre rade volte. Io andrò osservando il tempo et farròllo più presto mi sarà possibile," *ibid.*

<sup>58</sup> "Domenico di Piero ha le cose vi mandai in nota, et delle altre, le quali certamente sono belle," *ibid.*

<sup>59</sup> "Et il vostro cameo dell'archa vi rimanderò pel primo fidato," *ibid.*

<sup>60</sup> *Libro d'inventario*, 38.

<sup>61</sup> *Inventari medicei 1417-1465*, ed. Marco Spallanzani (Florence, 1996), 143; and Dacos et al. (eds.), *Il Tesoro di Lorenzo il Magnifico*, 64.





Figure 4.3. Entry into the Ark, cameo gem, London, The British Museum

loan. Several scenarios suggest themselves. One concerns his purchases from Domenico di Piero, as a personal favor so that the jeweler could have the signal pleasure of seeing and handling such an exquisite antique gem, which act of generosity might serve as an inducement to the reluctant man to part with some more of his treasures. As a connoisseur of fine antique gems, Domenico would have known about the “Ark” but probably never seen it, since it had been in Piero de’ Medici’s and then in Lorenzo’s possession for more than 20 years. Domenico could take pleasure and reassurance that his “Sigillo” would enjoy excellent company by joining the “Ark” and the famous “Tazza.” Nofri Tornabuoni once remarked that a fine antiquity deserved other worthy companions.<sup>62</sup> The physical association of top-quality antique gems in a single collection certainly

<sup>62</sup> “. . . in vero una si degna chosa merita d’essere achompogniata da una degna chompagnia,” ASF, MAP, 39, 442.

enhanced their reputation and perhaps even their estimated value in the eyes of contemporaries, which may explain why the “Ark,” listed at only 300 florins in the earlier inventory of Piero de’ Medici’s much smaller and less distinguished collection, appears in the 1492 inventory of Lorenzo’s treasure at 2,000 florins.<sup>63</sup>

By early November Soderini had already shown the “Ark” to Domenico di Piero and had plans to let him see it again. The ambassador seems to have been using it as a pawn to help build Lorenzo’s collection by inducing the jeweler to sell Lorenzo more gems. He wrote Michelozzi:

It seems to me that until he [Lorenzo] has the best of all he [Domenico di Piero] has and so as to obtain that cornelian [the “Sigillo”], (which every day he still ruminates about how much he prizes it), I showed him the “Ark” which he praised highly and told me he wants to see it again, which he may do, but without it leaving my hands!<sup>64</sup>

What an extraordinary piece of cultural diplomacy anchored by an antique gem, for no other instance has come to light in which Lorenzo allowed one of his most precious and extremely delicate gems to travel a great distance for show. Normally, if someone wanted to see items in the Medici collection, he had to travel to Florence and be given a tour. Lorenzo probably did not send the “Ark” to Venice merely for Domenico di Piero’s benefit or solely to convince him to part with the “Sigillo.”

The presence of the “Ark” in Venice would have given witness not only to Lorenzo’s taste and sociability, but also to his wealth and honor as a member of Italy’s cultured elite. Although popes and heads of state sometimes used their jewels, plate, and gems to secure loans, it seems doubtful Lorenzo would have placed the “Ark” at pawn in Venice at the same time that he was buying the “Sigillo” and other expensive gems. Why Lorenzo may have felt it important to demonstrate his honor by having Soderini show the “Ark” in Venice concerns the sad state of his business affairs there in the

<sup>63</sup> *Libro d’inventario*, 38.

<sup>64</sup> “Amme pare che fino a modo egli abbi tucto il meglio che chostui avessi et trarlli di mano quella chornola, la quale chostui tucto giorno anchora richorda che fa segno di stimarla assai, io gl’ò mostrò l’archa, la quale chomenda sommamente, et àmmi decto di nuovo volerla rivedere, il che sarà assua posta, ma nelle mani mie.” BNF, GC, 29, 105, fol. 17.

aftermath of the 1480–81 closing of the once profitable Medici bank, when its manager Giovanni Lanfredini had been arrested and expelled from the city under suspicion.<sup>65</sup> The arduous task of settling credits and debts stretched out for years, not to mention the mutual distrust that underscored Lorenzo’s political as well as his financial relations with Venice during this period. Settlement of claims had been suspended during 1483–84 when Venice and Florence found themselves opponents in the Ferrara War, which only worsened Lorenzo’s relations with his Venetian creditors.<sup>66</sup>

Powerful houses like the Ca’ Zanni that had owed the Medici at least 1000 ducats in 1481 still pestered Lorenzo as late as August 1487, although it is not clear whether still as debtors or as creditors.<sup>67</sup> They may have been the subject of ser Antonio della Valle’s aspersions to Michelozzi that the Medici’s Venetian credits were in the hands of “base and disrespected persons” (*persone ruinate et disfacte*).<sup>68</sup> Lorenzo’s agents had run afoul of equally powerful creditors among the patriciate, who still awaited payment, notably Andrea Cappello, wealthy banker, state creditor, and political heavyweight who, Lorenzo feared, would become an enemy if his claims were not settled soon.<sup>69</sup> In the meantime, in addition, a shipment of cloths belonging to Florentine merchants had been seized in Venice for payment of debts, and it took all of Soderini’s skill to get them returned to their owners, among them the Martelli, who, as former partners in the Medici’s Venice bank, still had outstanding claims against Lorenzo’s estate in 1494.<sup>70</sup> To make matters worse, “that fog-brained” “blemish” of a man (*quella neb[b]ia*, and *quello . . . pillicciaio*) Domenico Mati, Lorenzo’s agent, who had so suddenly abandoned his post in Venice, had not left anyone in charge or notified Soderini of his departure.<sup>71</sup>

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<sup>65</sup> *Lettere di Lorenzo de’ Medici*, V (1989), ed. Michael Mallett, 43–44. After Lanfredini left, his assistant Giovan Battista Ridolfi took charge and then Piero d’Antonio Taddei, who had instructions to close things up in spring 1481, De Roover, *Rise and Decline*, 252–53.

<sup>66</sup> *Lettere di Lorenzo de’ Medici*, VII (1998), ed. Michael Mallett, 236, n. 2.

<sup>67</sup> *Protocolli del carteggio di Lorenzo il Magnifico per gli anni 1473–74, 1477–92*, ed. Marcello del Piazzo (Florence, 1956), 174; *Lettere di Lorenzo de’ Medici*, XI (2004), ed. Melissa Meriam Bullard, 27.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*, 253.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*, 278.

<sup>70</sup> De Roover, *Rise and Decline*, 252–53.

<sup>71</sup> *Lettere di Lorenzo de’ Medici*, XI, 254.

He had left the whole mess behind and gone off to Loreto before even getting to Pistoia to attend his sick wife.<sup>72</sup>

The Venetian situation weighed heavily upon Lorenzo.<sup>73</sup> In desperation to sort out what threatened to turn into an angry hornet's nest, Lorenzo had turned to Giovanni Lanfredini, the former bank manager in Venice. Lanfredini had his hands more than full as Florentine ambassador to the papal court in Rome, but nonetheless worked diligently to salvage Lorenzo's, and by extension, his own honor in Venice.<sup>74</sup> In Lanfredini's view, Mati's presence in Venice had been a total waste, for it had produced only further expenses and zero benefit.<sup>75</sup> A needed break came from Agnolo Serragli, head of the Medici bank in Naples, who had managed to obtain a firm commitment from King Ferrante to settle some long outstanding credits owed the bank from the estate of his brother Cardinal Giovanni d'Aragona. Lorenzo could expect to recover close to 10,000 ducats in Naples, or about two-thirds of what the bank was owed.<sup>76</sup> Those funds properly belonged to the Naples and Rome banks, which had made the original loans to the cardinal, and the funds were sorely needed by Giovanni Tornabuoni, the manager in Rome. Instead, at Lanfredini's instigation and with Serragli's collaboration, Lorenzo dispatched a special messenger to Naples to collect directly from the king, so that the funds bypassed the Medici bank. They then planned for Giovan Battista Ridolfi, Lanfredini's former second-in-command

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*, 256.

<sup>73</sup> For example, on 16 October, "Desidero anchora che pensiate come mostrate a queste nostre cose da Vinegia perché mi sono molto a cuore, et ogni di ci fanno qualche carico, come vedete, et posarle bisogna, et crediate che non potete mettere o il pensiero o la opera a cosa che io stimi per hora più," *ibid.*, 301–2, and again on 3 November, "Con questa vi mando quanto vedrete da Vinegia. Potrete comprendere per questi advisi in che dispiacere mi truovo insino che quelle cose non sono composte. A me pare che a questa volta ad ogni modo habbiamo asettarla, perché è meglio fare per questa via che havere ad fare con carico nostro. . . . Potremo aiutarci delli assegnameanti habbiamo nel Reame. . . . Se mai facesti cosa che mi piacessi et se mi volete bene, pensate di levarmi questa molestia che mi duole fino al cuor havere a sentire ogni di queste cose pocho onorevole et rematiche. . . . Et infino che non veggo questo acconcio non starò mai quieto o senza alteratione," *ibid.*, 365–66.

<sup>74</sup> On 16 November Lanfredini wrote that "ò 2 desiderii, l'uno levare noia a voi; l'altro levarla a mme, ma la vostra mi preme sino al vivo, perché considero le qualità vostre et la natura vostra, e crediate mi premono e affighono," *ibid.*, 441n.

<sup>75</sup> "insino a qui ci sia suto spese senza frutto . . . et così credo sarà per l'avenire tanto sono impessimate quelle cose e senza alchuno favore." *ibid.*, 254.

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*, 278n.

in Venice and someone well-informed of the Medici finances there, to travel to Venice to discharge Lorenzo's debts once and for all.<sup>77</sup> Through Soderini's mediation, they expected to make an honorable arrangement with the Venetians.<sup>78</sup> Finally on 26 November, Soderini informed Lorenzo he had negotiated the settlement<sup>79</sup> and remained confident it would work to everyone's "honor and profit" (*honore et utile*).<sup>80</sup>

By the last week in November the pieces for the settlement had fallen into place. The doge even made public statements celebrating Lorenzo's "virtues, honorable condition, and well-being."<sup>81</sup> At the same time Soderini also began making arrangements for the safe return to Florence of Lorenzo's "Ark," appropriately symbolic of Salvation and in this case Lorenzo's salvation in Venice.<sup>82</sup> The business affair turned out even better than Soderini had expected, for in a demonstration of Medici good faith, Agnolo Serragli himself journeyed all the way from Naples, and accompanied by Domenico Mati, left Florence for Venice on 11 December.<sup>83</sup>

One suspects that the Neapolitan funds Lanfredini and Serragli had pried loose in Naples were used not just to satisfy Lorenzo's Venetian creditors but also to purchase gems from Domenico di Piero. Together gems and money had taken part in an elaborate diplomatic dance to shore up Lorenzo's reputation and honor. As part of that performance, for Soderini to have had on loan Lorenzo's most prized cameo, the "Ark," to show around Venetian high society, reconfirmed a certain sympathy and commonality of interests between Lorenzo and the Venetian upper crust—among them his creditors, themselves wealthy, well-educated connoisseurs of fine objects. Soderini's oiled tongue, the presence of the "Ark" in Venice, and Lorenzo's

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.*, 441n.

<sup>78</sup> "Con il mezzo di Paol Antonio [Soderini] condurrà le cose con honore et con comodo," *ibid.*, 441n.

<sup>79</sup> "... sieno satisfatti di quello che giustamente et honestamente havessimo ad havere et non altrimenti," ASF, MAP, 43, 39.

<sup>80</sup> BNF, GC, 29, 105, fol. 19.

<sup>81</sup> "Noi sapemo certo che il Magnifico Lorenzo ama noi et questa Signoria di bono core, come amemo noi Sua Magnificantia per le sue virtù et bone conditioni, et semo, ogni volta che accadessi, per farne ogni evidente dimonstratione, et però è facile a credere a questa Signoria che d'ogni suo honore et bene il Magnifico Lorenzo si rallegrì et habbi grande piacere," *Lettere di Lorenzo de' Medici*, XI, 549n.

<sup>82</sup> "Et il vostro cammeo dell'archa vi rimanderò pel primo." ASF, MAP, 43, 39.

<sup>83</sup> *Protocolli*, 368.

demonstrated ability to purchase the “Sigillo” outright gave powerful witness to his wealth and capacity to settle his debts that may have soothed their impatience and bought Lorenzo some needed time until the Neapolitan funds could be liberated. In the highly performative culture of Renaissance elites, such gestures carried great weight.

It is entirely possible that the Venetians also engaged in their own performances surrounding Lorenzo’s gems and finances. One suspects that there may have been more than just cloudy weather behind Domenico di Piero’s refusal to show Soderini more gems in the very same weeks when everyone was awaiting word about the funds from Naples to settle the Medici debts. Once the settlement had been arranged to everyone’s honor and satisfaction, the Venetian sun may have begun to shine again as it did for the biblical Noah after many long days and nights of being tossed on stormy seas. In Lorenzo’s case, however, few if any in Venice or even among Lorenzo’s circle of collaborators could have known that back in Florence Lorenzo was sailing a leaky ship. His debts in the Monte Comune in this period surpassed 20,000 florins and the collapse of the Medici financial empire was only a few years away.<sup>84</sup> The purchases of Domenico di Piero’s prized gems and Soderini’s showing off the “Ark” must have given the intended impression to contemporary observers that Lorenzo’s liquidity and wealth were intact, when in fact they were stretched very thin. The gems helped cover a yawning chasm between what Lorenzo actually had in the way of resources and what he gave the impression of having!

Soderini may have used the “Ark” as a diplomatic token in yet another way, as a personal bargaining chip with Lorenzo in an attempt to secure his own return to Florence. In his letter of 5 November, when negotiations with the creditors were going poorly, Soderini submitted a plea to Michelozzi for his own recall to attend to pressing family and tax matters that were suffering in his extended absence from Florence.<sup>85</sup> He accompanied that plea with the suggestion that he retain the beautiful cornelian in Venice until he came home to guarantee its safe transport.

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<sup>84</sup> Alison Brown, “Public and Private Interest: Lorenzo, the Monte and the Seventeen Reformers,” in *Lorenzo de’ Medici Studi*, ed. Gian Carlo Garfagnini (Florence, 1992), 103–65, at 126.

<sup>85</sup> BNF, CG, 29, 105, fols. 17 and 19.

I want it [the “Ark”] to go back just as soon as possible, and I promise you I am as jealous of it as if it were my own, and for this reason, unless you request otherwise, I will keep it here until I return [to Florence] and can bring it safely.<sup>86</sup>

Understandably he felt trepidation at having custody of such a valuable antique gem that didn’t belong to him. He also did not want to be held responsible for a piece that had been broken off the gem:

I think that a piece of leg from the top-most horse was missing before you sent it, and I am anxious for you to confirm it, for, were it otherwise, I would take double displeasure.<sup>87</sup>

Lorenzo apparently signaled his desire to have the “Ark” home sooner, for in his letter of 26 November announcing a successful end to the Venetian crisis, Soderini stated he would be sending the “Ark” by the first trusted courier (*pel primo fidato*). Bowing to Lorenzo’s wishes, Soderini remained as ambassador in Venice despite the fact that, as grumbled to Michelozzi, he would now have the extra expense of purchasing a winter wardrobe since he had brought with him only light summer garments, in anticipation of a short embassy.<sup>88</sup>

Lorenzo’s acquisition of the “Sigillo” in Venice also had a Roman context that further illuminates the “sociability” created by his gems. On the same day that Soderini announced he had finally cinched purchase of the gem, Lotti wrote Michelozzi from Rome that he had heard Lorenzo had bought the “Sigillo” from Domenico di Piero.<sup>89</sup> How had he heard? Probably not from Michelozzi to whom he was writing, but perhaps from Nofri Tornabuoni at the Medici

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<sup>86</sup> “Voglio che *statim* ritorni che vi promecto ne ò più gelosia che se fussi mia propria, et per questo se non sarò sollicitato da voi, la terrò tanto che io me ne ritorni per richondurlla bene salva,” *ibid.*, fol. 17.

<sup>87</sup> “Extimo che un pezo di gamba che manca a uno chavallo che v’è su manchassi prima che la mandassi, et così mi sarà charo intendere, perché quando fussi altrimenti, ne averrei dopp[io] gran dispiacere,” *ibid.*, fol. 17. The broken leg is still visible.

<sup>88</sup> BNF, CG, 105, fol. 8. Lorenzo continued relations with Domenico di Piero, who wrote him in December about disputed credits he had with the Medici bank in Rome, perhaps arising from the purchase of jewels, *Protocolli*, 369. In 1489 on Soderini’s advice, Lorenzo began to use the papal legate, Niccolò Franco, as intermediary with Domenico di Piero for more gems (MAP, 41, 250 and MAP, 43, 75). At his death in 1497 the jeweller’s testament claimed credits worth 15,000 ducats owed by among others the Medici Bank, Perry, “Wealth, Art, and Display,” 271n.

<sup>89</sup> “Intendo el Magnifico Lorenzo havere havuto quella bella corniola da Domenico di Piero,” BNF, GC, 29, 83, fol. 46.

bank, or perhaps from his friend Ciampolino, or even from Domenico di Piero himself. Lotti's letter raises the intriguing possibility that dealers, collectors, and their agents in the major Italian cities and courts were quite familiar with one another and knew certain items in each others' collections, since an important sale like the famous "Sigillo" had quickly made news elsewhere. By the late fifteenth century, the existence already of an Italian, not just local "market" for antiquities might help explain why the prices of rare, good-quality antiquities remained consistently so much higher than the prices for new contemporary fine art and why their values recorded in estate lists such as the 1492 Medici inventory appear so inflated. Competition to get first crack at the best available antiquities could be intense and would have placed Lorenzo in direct competition with wealthy connoisseurs of the Gonzaga and d'Este families as well as cardinals like Giuliano della Rovere.

Knowledge of important antiquities also spread through word of mouth from visitors such as Cardinal Barbaro who traveled and had opportunity to view Lorenzo's and other fine collections. In their physical absence, drawings and impressions also allowed interested parties to gain knowledge of particular objects second-hand. In his letter to Michelozzi regarding the "Sigillo," Lotti stated that he and Ciampolino were anxious to obtain a good-quality impression of the cornelian either in wax or plaster and begged Michelozzi to get one made and sent to Rome.<sup>90</sup> As long as the figures came out clearly enough, hence Lotti's insistence on a "good" impression, reproductions in various media would allow familiarity with the objects to ripple further outwards. In the 1460s Paul II had had a copy of the "Sigillo" put on the reverse of a portrait medal commemorating his papacy.<sup>91</sup> Images of ancient coins and medals were often incorporated in Renaissance paintings, especially portraits, which suggests

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<sup>90</sup> "El Ciampolini et io desideriamo sommamente vederne una impressione in cera o in gesso. Pregovi procuriate la habbiamo e che sia bene impressa," *ibid.* A sixteenth-century Saxon prince received advice to purchase copies and impressions in the absence of originals to build his collection: see Barbara Gutfleisch and Joachim Menzhausen, "How a Kunstkammer should be formed. Gabriel Kaltenmarckt's advice to Christian I of Saxony on the formation of an art collection, 1587," *JHC*, 1 (1989), 3–32, at 11. He also praised the early Medici whose collections, he claimed, even more than their deeds, elevated them "almost to kingly majesty," *ibid.*, 8.

<sup>91</sup> The medal, designed by Cristoforo di Geremia, and today in the British Museum, is reproduced in Syson and Thornton, *Objects*, 107.



that owners and viewers considered these objects, even through reproductions, to possess talismanic qualities. The abundance of Renaissance manuscripts and sketch books “publishing” antiquities testify to that common mode of transmitting knowledge and pleasure of antiquities.<sup>92</sup> In a sense, Ciampolino still possessed part of the Phaëthon cornelian he had sold Lorenzo in 1487 through the impressions he had made, for his copies promoted study and conversation.

In the fifteenth century, before a true market that commoditized antiquities had emerged, collecting rare and precious gems, coins, medals, and sculpture involved considerably more than simple sales transactions. When restored to their fuller historical context, trophy pieces such as Lorenzo de’ Medici’s “Tazza,” “Sigillo,” and “Ark” tell much about how they functioned as virtuous objects that reflected not only their owners’ cultural tastes and domestic settings but also Renaissance finances, social relations, and even diplomacy. Precious antiquities might secure loans, bestow honor, shore up reputations, or become fascinating conversation pieces. The acquisition of the Medici gems had engaged several agents in complex negotiations that intertwined with the important political and diplomatic events of the day. Fundamentally, however, these objects brought pleasure and helped cement bonds between educated friends and acquaintances who shared a fascination in a noble and respected past that communicated to them directly through its physical remnants. In the Renaissance to possess antiquity meant to be conversant both in the languages of a distant past and in the idiom of the contemporary world that those objects helped bridge and in which they played a vital and living role.

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<sup>92</sup> See the index of sketchbooks and artists in Bober and Rubinstein, *Renaissance Artists and Antique Sculpture*, 451–79.



## CHAPTER FIVE

### THE GUICCIARDINIAN MOMENT: THE *DISCORSI PALLESCI*, HUMANISM, AND ARISTOCRATIC REPUBLICANISM IN SIXTEENTH-CENTURY FLORENCE\*

Mark Jurdjevic

This article considers the relationship between humanism and the varieties of republicanism circulating in Florence after the suppression of the second and third Florentine republics in 1512 and 1530. Political conflict in Florence from the age of Dante to the republic of 1527–30 tended to revolve around and between two competing visions of the republic and two consequent political languages: the one aristocratic, closed, and exclusive, and the other popular, broad-based, and inclusive.<sup>1</sup> For the aristocrats, who most frequently competed amongst themselves for influence and power, politics was rooted in informal private patronage: personal and neighborhood ties of dependence and obligation, marriages and friendships, and the informal distribution of favors.<sup>2</sup> The middle rank of Florentine society, the *popolo*, who lacked the wealth and sheer family size necessary to make the patronage model work, offered a different conception of politics and legitimacy, based on a public, decentralized federation of guilds that, at least in theory, reflected the popular principles of consent, representation, delegation, and accountability.<sup>3</sup> The various

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\* Thanks to Christopher Celenza, Kenneth Gouwens, and John Najemy for criticism and feedback on earlier drafts of this paper.

<sup>1</sup> John Najemy, "The Dialogue of Power in Florentine Politics," *City-States in Classical Antiquity and Medieval Italy*, ed. Anthony Molho, Julia Emlen, and Kurt Raaflaub (Ann Arbor, 1991), 269–88; Felix Gilbert, *Machiavelli and Guicciardini: Politics and History in Sixteenth-Century Florence* (Princeton, 1965), 7–152.

<sup>2</sup> Some classic analyses of politics in terms of informal patronage networks: Dale Kent, *The Rise of the Medici: Faction in Florence 1426–1434* (Oxford, 1978); Dale Kent, "The Florentine *Reggimento* in the Fifteenth Century," *Renaissance Quarterly*, 28 (1975): 575–638; Dale Kent and Francis William Kent, *Neighbors and Neighborhood in Renaissance Florence: The District of the Red Lion in the Fifteenth Century* (Locust Valley, N.Y., 1982).

<sup>3</sup> Summarized by Najemy in "Dialogue of Power," 283, but set out comprehensively in John Najemy, *Corporatism and Consensus in Florentine Electoral Politics, 1280–1400* (Chapel Hill, 1982).

successes, failures, and interactions between these two styles of politics dominate the political narrative of Renaissance Florence.

However, as John Najemy has shown, these two languages of politics were not discrete, stable discourses. They interacted as a dialogue, each exerting an influence on the other and on itself in the process. On four separate occasions between 1250 and 1382, guild-based challenges to the political dominance of aristocratic elites succeeded. In terms of historical impact, the brevity of the popular regimes consequently established was more than offset by the dramatic qualities of the victory and the far-reaching changes enacted by the new regimes, of which the Ordinances of Justice is the most famous example. In the wake of these challenges, the aristocrats determined to unbuild and destroy the foundations of the guild-based republic, a largely successful endeavor that spanned the suppression of the Ciompi revolt in the late fourteenth century to the rise of the Medici in 1434. Their success is inexplicable, Najemy argued, without recognizing the degree to which the aristocrats appropriated the popular political language of the guilds, refashioning themselves as virtuous and humble merchant-citizens who believed in the accountability and equality of all before the law.<sup>4</sup> After the entrenchment of aristocratic oligarchy in the wake of the Ciompi revolt, the last and most turbulent popular uprising, oligarchic politics may still have been conducted through mechanisms of private patronage, but the appearance and presentation of that politics had been transformed utterly.

The rhetorical underpinnings of humanism and the range of classical authors upon which it drew and elaborated endowed the movement with potential utility to proponents of both republican visions. The connection between humanism and the aristocratic variety of republicanism is most clear and has been best documented for the early *quattrocento*, when the patrician elite adopted humanist language to legitimize the victory of consensus politics over guild corporatism.<sup>5</sup> Civic humanism clearly played a substantial role in the new aristocratic politics of civic appearance that characterized the fifteenth century.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Najemy, "Dialogue of Power," 280–88.

<sup>5</sup> John Najemy, "Civic Humanism and Florentine Politics," in *Renaissance Civic Humanism: Reappraisals and Reflections*, ed. James Hankins (Cambridge, 2000), 75–104.

<sup>6</sup> Mark Jurdjevic, "Civic Humanism and the Rise of the Medici," *Renaissance Quarterly*, 52 (1999): 994–1020; James Hankins, "The 'Baron Thesis' After Forty Years and Some Recent Studies of Leonardo Bruni," *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 56 (1995), 309–38; *idem*, "The Civic Panegyrics of Leonardo Bruni," in *idem*, *Renaissance Civic Humanism*, 143–78.

But even during the late-fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries, humanist influences were equally apparent in the articulations of popular and egalitarian republicanism by Machiavelli and Savonarola, both of whom stressed the need for political structures capable of withstanding the pull of private influence.<sup>7</sup>

The proponents of aristocratic republicanism in the sixteenth century have generally received less attention than their fifteenth-century counterparts, but those who have addressed them are equally clear about their debt to their humanist educations. For example, J. G. A. Pocock's chapter on Guicciardini and optimate prudence in *The Machiavellian Moment* and Athanasios Moulakis' studies of Guicciardini's *Discorso di Logrogno* situate Guicciardini clearly within intellectual traditions set out by the earlier civic humanists.<sup>8</sup> Felix Gilbert's work on sixteenth-century Florentine political thought remains the most detailed and arguably most influential discussion of aristocratic republicanism. Gilbert emphasized the way in which important and vocal advocates of broad-based republicanism, most notably Savonarola, interpreted and persuasively portrayed the inclusive Great Council as the natural embodiment of long-standing indigenous Florentine political traditions. The effective appropriation of tradition by their opponents, Gilbert argued, forced the aristocrats to reject wholesale the sanctity of precedent and instead to champion: (1) the legitimacy of innovative political structures; (2) rational efficiency as the primary criterion of good government; and (3) a Polybian mixed regime, a structure inherently more complex and abstract than that advocated by popular republicans, whose theory appeared more "natural" since it constituted one of the three fundamental forms of democracy, aristocracy, and monarchy.<sup>9</sup>

In each of these positions, Gilbert argued, the aristocrats benefited from and employed their familiarity with humanism. Humanism celebrated individuals who could control and transform the social and political conditions around them; it rejected universalist claims

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<sup>7</sup> For humanism's influence on Savonarola, see Donald Weinstein, *Savonarola and Florence: Prophecy and Patriotism in the Renaissance* (Princeton, 1971), 27–66, 185–226; for humanism's influence on Machiavelli, see Felix Gilbert, *Machiavelli and Guicciardini*, 153–60.

<sup>8</sup> Athanasios Moulakis, *Republicanism and Realism in Renaissance Florence: Francesco Guicciardini's Discorso di Logrogno* (Lanham, Md., 1998); J. G. A. Pocock, *The Machiavellian Moment: Florentine Political Thought and the Atlantic Republican Tradition* (Princeton, 1975).

<sup>9</sup> Gilbert, *Machiavelli and Guicciardini*, 100–104.

about eternal orders and truths, instead emphasizing that languages and cultures were mutable over time; and it legitimized the classical authorities upon which theorists of mixed government drew. As the new “prophets of force,” the aristocrats subscribed to a theory of government in which the legitimacy, autonomy, and relevance of the state were measured solely by its ability to muster force—and in this conviction, too, humanism’s critique of mercenary forces influenced their thinking and articulation.<sup>10</sup>

The general consensus that aristocratic republicans articulated themselves through humanism in the sixteenth century suggests an essential continuity in the political function of humanism. The first major steps toward establishing a durable and narrow oligarchy in Florence took place during the transition from the fourteenth to fifteenth centuries, and were exactly coterminous with the aristocracy’s reinvention of itself as *patres conscripti*, the humanist model of virtuous citizenry.<sup>11</sup> For Gilbert and others, it seemed entirely appropriate that humanism’s alliance with aristocratic politics would continue in the second and third decades of the sixteenth century. After all, by the mid-sixteenth century, the Florentine republic had been reorganized as a princely structure, with a Medici duke at the center surrounded by an aristocratic senate and aristocratic councilors, only a relatively minor variation on the restricted oligarchy the aristocrats had been struggling to establish since adopting the new style of humanist political appearance a century earlier.

However, the analyses by Gilbert, Pocock, and others have almost entirely focused on Guicciardini’s more theoretical writings, particularly the *Discorso di Logrogno*, the *Dialogo del Reggimento di Firenze*, and the *Considerazioni intorno ai Discorsi del Machiavelli*. They have also assumed that Guicciardini’s thought was typical of aristocratic republicanism and, as a result, rarely drew on the writings of Guicciardini’s *ottimati* allies.<sup>12</sup> If one approaches the same questions in sources rooted in entirely practical matters, rather than in theoretical works, if one examines the intellectual instincts and habits displayed by the *ottimati* when reflecting on urgent and pressing political questions, the

<sup>10</sup> Gilbert, *Machiavelli and Guicciardini*, 129–31.

<sup>11</sup> See Najemy, “Dialogue of Power,” 269–88; “Civic Humanism and Florentine Politics,” 75–104.

<sup>12</sup> Gilbert was explicit about this point: “Guicciardini fully shared their [aristocrats’] political views and aims.” Gilbert, *Machiavelli and Guicciardini*, 82–83.

relationship of popular and aristocratic republicanisms to humanism looks quite different.<sup>13</sup>

I consider the relationship from the perspective of a relatively little-studied body of political literature from the great era of sixteenth-century crisis: recommendations from the pillars of the Medici party on how best to stabilize the political arena following the suppression of the Florentine republics of 1494–1512 and 1527–1530.<sup>14</sup> By way of comparison with the ardent Medici partisans, however, I begin with Machiavelli's *Discorso sopra il riformare lo stato di Firenze*, written around 1520, at the request of Leo X after the death of Lorenzo de' Medici, Duke of Urbino.<sup>15</sup> Shortly after Leo's death in 1521, the same question of the best way to secure Medici power in Florence was taken up by Giulio de' Medici, the future Clement VII, who commissioned a treatise in 1522 from Alessandro de' Pazzi. The remaining treatises, by Francesco Vettori, Roberto Acciaiuoli, and Luigi and Francesco Guicciardini, were written in the aftermath of the collapse of the third Florentine republic in 1530.

Overwhelmingly, the *Discorsi Palleschi* reveal the sudden and sharp separation of humanism from the language of aristocratic republicanism. The aristocrats entirely rejected the humanist inflections that had characterized their language in the fifteenth century. Surveying the previous century, they concluded that their adoption of the humanist mode of citizenship—their articulation of politics in terms of institutions of election, consent, and representation, and indeed of political innovation altogether—had failed. We know that they had just crushed the last popular republican uprising in Florentine history, but they did not, and were certain of another imminent popular challenge; they were less certain, to put it mildly, of their ability to withstand one. In their analyses of how to make the best

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<sup>13</sup> Rudolf von Albertini analyzed these texts and Medicean constitutionalism in detail in *Das florentinische Staatsbewusstsein im Übergang von der Republik zum Prinzipat* (Bern, 1955), 186–99, but he did not address the origins and influences of their recommendations.

<sup>14</sup> *Discorsi intorno alla riforma dello stato di Firenze (1522–32)*, ed. Gino Capponi, *Archivio Storico Italiano* [henceforth abbreviated *ASI*], 1 (1842), 420–67; these *discorsi* have been discussed by Felix Gilbert, “Alcuni discorsi di uomini politici fiorentini e la politica di Clemente VII per la restaurazione medicea,” *ASI*, 93, no. 2 (1935), 3–24; Rosemary Devonshire-Jones, *Francesco Vettori: Florentine Citizen and Medici Servant* (London, 1972), 239–44; von Albertini, *Das florentinische Staatsbewusstsein*, 186–99.

<sup>15</sup> On Machiavelli's *Discorso* and its relationship to his later republicanism, see my “Machiavelli's Hybrid Republicanism,” forthcoming in the *English Historical Review*.

of a bad situation, they returned wholesale to the conceptual vocabulary of informal systems of patronage, rooted in their old way of understanding a *reggimento* as a mechanism for distributing *onore* and *utile*.

All of the characteristics of humanist-inflected political theory described by Gilbert emerge clearly in Machiavelli's *Discorso*, however. The core distinction between Machiavelli's *discorso* and those of his aristocratic counterparts lay in their assumptions about the basic nature of individuals. Machiavelli saw the individual's fulfillment as a function of political engagement, and the stability of the regime that he urged the Medici to adopt lay in institutional outlets for the expression of political interests by each of the city's three categories of citizen—a system that thoroughly embraced the guild principles of consent, representation, delegation, and accountability. The *Palleschi*, however, saw the individual's fulfillment as a function of prosperity, best distributed according to the tried and true techniques of patronage. The stability of the regimes they proposed to the Medici consistently lay in rewarding allies with lucrative offices while making as few financial demands as possible of the broad ranks of the disenfranchised citizenry. When denied the relative luxury of sustained meditation and abstract reasoning, it appears that the aristocratic *Palleschi*'s confidence in political innovation and the legitimacy of classical political models was weaker than it appears elsewhere. Judging from the *Discorsi Palleschi*, humanism became less closely associated with aristocratic republicanism during the sixteenth century than it had been during the fifteenth.

Part One below examines Machiavelli's *discorso* as an expression of the humanist style of political thinking outlined by Gilbert. Part Two contrasts that style of thinking with the *discorsi* of Alessandro Pazzi, Roberto Acciaiuoli, Francesco Vettori, and Luigi and Francesco Guicciardini. The third and final part examines the *Discorsi Palleschi* as an expression of temporal, existential crisis more commonly associated with Machiavellian republicanism in this era. Gilbert and von Albertini both underscored the centrality of force in the thinking of the Medicean constitutionalists, but neither drew attention to the skepticism of the *Palleschi*, the degree to which their advocacy of force was rooted in their awareness of the fragility of Medicean dominance and their privileged position within it. The *Palleschi* were candid about the limited prospects in Florence for establishing an enduring oligarchic regime structured around a ducal center; the appeal to



force was an attempt to delay the popular uprising that they believed was inevitable. Nothing in their understanding of Florentine history would have enabled them to explain the unexpected absence of a concerted popular reaction.

## 1

As a result of the early death of Lorenzo de' Medici, Duke of Urbino, in 1519, the Medici faced a new problem: how best to organize a Florentine state controlled by two ecclesiastics without legitimate heirs? At the same time, the Medici pope Leo X was selecting an official historian for the city. As part of the process that ultimately led to Machiavelli's appointment as the Medici historian, Leo X commissioned from him a treatise that outlined his solution to the problem of Medici government in Florence.<sup>16</sup> Machiavelli's answer to Leo echoed a number of arguments from the *Prince* and the *Discourses*, urged the adoption of a republican government, and anticipated the major argument of the *Florentine Histories* that government should exist for the common good, rather than for the protection and prosperity of those in power.<sup>17</sup>

Machiavelli begins with the argument that the pure forms of government, true princedoms and true republics, are inherently more stable than those that fall between the two—a reinterpretation of Polybius' theory of constitutional cycles.<sup>18</sup> Governments of the middle sort have to stave off mutation from the populist and elitist positions, whereas the pure forms need only worry about degeneration in one direction. To anchor Medici power, then, as Machiavelli saw it, Leo had only two choices: to establish a true princedom or a true republic. Of these choices, Machiavelli is quick to add, the princedom is less likely to take root and to work. Here he reiterates arguments

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<sup>16</sup> Felix Gilbert, "Machiavelli's *Istorie Fiorentine*: An Essay in Interpretation," in *Studies on Machiavelli*, ed. Myron P. Gilmore (Florence, 1972), 73–99.

<sup>17</sup> On this implicit thesis of the *Storie Fiorentine*, see Gilbert, "Machiavelli's *Istorie Fiorentine*"; Roberto Ridolfi, *The Life of Niccolò Machiavelli* (Chicago, 1963), 183–84; and John M. Najemy, "Machiavelli and the Medici: The Lessons of Florentine History," *Renaissance Quarterly*, 35 (1982), 551–76.

<sup>18</sup> Niccolò Machiavelli, "A Discourse on Remodeling the Government of Florence," *Machiavelli: The Chief Works and Others*, ed. Allan Gilbert (3 vols.; Durham, N.C., 1958), I, 106.

from the *Prince* and *Discourses* about the significance of political customs and habits, Florentine egalitarian traditions, and the absence of a feudal nobility.<sup>19</sup> The challenge that the Medici ecclesiastics face, as does Machiavelli as their theorist, is to integrate Medici power and influence with the institutions of a well-ordered republic, and in the remainder of his brief *discorso* he simultaneously provides a blue-print for an innovative and harmonious resolution of Florentine and Medici interests and introduces the critique of earlier Florentine politics that he would articulate in greater detail in the *Histories*.

Machiavelli explicitly states that innovative structures are needed; any appeal to tradition is merely an appeal to a demonstrably unworkable solution.<sup>20</sup> The Albizzi regime created a republic dominated by aristocrats, in which the “people did not have their share.”<sup>21</sup> Nor did it even have a system of public indictments, in which citizens could at least protect themselves from the *ottimati*; a mechanism was needed to “cause fear in great men, so that they would not set up factions, which are the ruin of government.”<sup>22</sup> Cosimo’s regime lasted longer than the Albizzean oligarchy because it was established with, rather than in the face of, popular support. But it suffered from a basic confusion of authority, in which matters were determined “according to the will of one man, yet [were] decided with the approval of many.”<sup>23</sup> The Soderini regime brought about its own downfall by failing to provide the *ottimati* with an outlet for their ambition and vanity.<sup>24</sup> Each of these regimes failed to recognize, Machiavelli argues, the basic insight at the core of his solution: that political impulses are universal and inescapable. Any regime that hopes to last must provide for the political participation of its citizens.<sup>25</sup>

Because none of the preceding regimes recognized that key insight about human nature, the institutions they have created are unnecessary at best and corrupt at worst. Machiavelli makes an aggressive case not only for the legitimacy of political innovation, but also for

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<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, 106–7.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, 108–9.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, 109.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, 101–2.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, 102–3.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, 108.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, 110: “Without satisfying the generality of the citizens, to set up a stable government is always impossible.”

the fundamental illegitimacy of traditional Florentine structures, most of which were formed “not because they were necessary to good government but to feed through them the vanity of more of the citizens. . . .”<sup>26</sup> For this reason, Machiavelli recommends the abolition of all the major institutions and councils of the republican tradition: the *Signoria*, the *Otto di pratica*, the *Dodici buonomini*, and the councils of the seventy, hundred, people, and commune. In their place, Machiavelli suggests a hierarchy of interdependent councils, each the exclusive voice and expression of one of the three types of citizen: the aristocratic elite, the middle ranks, and the people.<sup>27</sup> From the small but powerful circle of elite families, a committee of sixty-five will be elected for life and will assume the responsibilities of the abolished *Signoria*. From the larger circle of middling families, a committee of two hundred will be elected for life and will assume the responsibilities of the abolished councils. Contrary to the recurring argument in the *Prince* that the only political desire of the people is the absence of oppression, Machiavelli recommends here that the people be incorporated directly into the regime. From the broad ranks of the people, a committee of 1,000, or at least 600, would reassume the functions of the Great Council, whose hall should be reopened. They would elect all the offices of the republic, except the members of the Sixty-five and Two Hundred, appointed directly by Leo. Thirty citizens from the Sixty-five and Two Hundred would form a court of appeal; its strength would lie partly in numbers, since Machiavelli acknowledged that a few citizens would lack the courage to punish important men, and in its secret deliberations, so that each judge’s vote remained anonymous.<sup>28</sup>

The popular class becomes the glue that holds together and ensures the interlocking of the constituent parts. From the sixteen standard bearers of the companies of the people, none of whom could be selected from the Sixty-five and whose tenure would be restricted to one month to help distribute the office more widely through the city, four rotational provosts would be chosen, either by the Medici or by the council. Enactments of the councils of Sixty-five and Two Hundred would require the presence of two provosts to be valid;

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<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, 109.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, 109–10.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, 112–13.

not only would their presence during deliberation be required, they would have the right to veto and appeal the legislation. In such a way, Machiavelli argues, the dignity of the troublesomely vain aristocracy is protected, since the people's representatives would not have the right to cast a vote; the people's political ambitions would be acknowledged, as they would have the power to judge and obstruct proposals deemed contrary to their interests.<sup>29</sup>

Machiavelli's *discorso* is clearly a defense of the superiority of republican regimes, at least in Florence's case, but he has incorporated elements that would make it attractive to Leo X. Machiavelli builds into all of these institutions a mechanism for the direct Medici control of appointees, though Machiavelli points out that, because it is structurally well-ordered, Leo need only keep "half an eye turned on it."<sup>30</sup> Because the Medici control the appointment process, the government can be considered a monarchy while Giulio and Giovanni still live.<sup>31</sup> After their demise, however, the system reverts to a well-ordered and self-sustaining republic. Machiavelli concludes with an exhortation to Leo to remember that not only will he benefit the Florentines by bequeathing them a functional and stable government, he will also thereby secure for his family the greatest fame attainable by mortals, echoing statements from the *Prince* and *Discourses* that "no man is so much exalted by any act of his as are those men who have with laws and with institutions remodeled republics and kingdoms; these are, after those who have been gods, the first to be praised."<sup>32</sup>

If we return to Gilbert's analysis of humanism's impact on sixteenth-century Florentine political thought, we see in Machiavelli's egalitarian republicanism all of the characteristics he attributed to the Guicciardinian aristocratic position.<sup>33</sup> Machiavelli rejected the appeal to traditional political structures, arguing instead that only an innovative approach could stabilize Florentine politics. Although

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<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, 110–11.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, 115.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, 113.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, 114.

<sup>33</sup> On the ways in which Machiavelli's thinking differed from fifteenth-century humanist political thought, see James Hankins, "Humanism and the Origins of Modern Political Thought," in *The Cambridge Companion to Renaissance Humanism*, ed. Jill Kraye (Cambridge, 1996), 118–41, at 134–35.

he insisted on the preservation of the Great Council, the institution that symbolized the popular inclinations of egalitarian republicans, Machiavelli nevertheless argued for a complex, mixed regime, based on interlocking and interdependent class councils. He appealed to classical sources to glorify and buttress his exhortation, likening a Medici attempt to found a well-ordered republic to the efforts of Solon and Lycurgus.<sup>34</sup> Although the patrician elite of the early *quattrocento* embraced civic humanism at least in part because it helped them articulate the recent victory of a narrow oligarchy over the champions of the broader and more popular guild republicanism, Machiavelli's *discorso* reminds us of the intellectual plasticity of humanism, of the ways in which it created habits of thinking rather than specific ideologies.<sup>35</sup> After all, Machiavelli was no sympathizer of oligarchy, he approved of guild republicanism, and he criticized Bruni's history for glossing over the failures of consensus politics as directed by the *ottimati*.<sup>36</sup> Nevertheless, in a treatise that relied heavily on rhetoric, the power to persuade, Machiavelli couched his appeal to Leo X to establish a self-perpetuating republic in terms and arguments that reflected familiarity and intellectual agreement with humanist assumptions about politics.

We can also see in Machiavelli's egalitarian position echoes of arguments and assumptions attributed to Florentine humanism by Hans Baron, Quentin Skinner, Ronald Witt, and J. G. A. Pocock. Each of these scholars of course has advanced a different interpretation of Florentine humanism and republicanism; but they all consistently underscore one important point: that the political theory of the humanists, however interpreted, was rooted in a common assumption about the essentially political nature of individuals.

Baron's interpretation of civic humanism stressed its active nature, its argument that individuals were fulfilled and perfected through

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<sup>34</sup> "And so much has this glory been esteemed by men seeking for nothing other than glory that when unable to form a republic in reality, they have done it in writing, as Aristotle, Plato, and many others, who have wished to show the world that if they have not founded a free government, as did Solon and Lycurgus, they have failed not through their ignorance but through their impotence for putting it into practice." Machiavelli, "Discourse," 114.

<sup>35</sup> On the plasticity of humanism, see Jurdjevic, "Civic Humanism and the Rise of the Medici."

<sup>36</sup> John Najemy, "Arti and Ordini in Machiavelli's *Storie Fiorentine*," in *Essays Presented to Myron Gilmore*, ed. Sergio Bertelli and Gloria Ramakus (2 vols.; Florence, 1978), I, 161-91.

direct political participation in the republic; Skinner shifted the focus from individuals to institutions, emphasizing in Italian republicanism a neo-Roman ideology of liberty rooted in self-governing, elective structures of rule.<sup>37</sup> For all Machiavelli's cynical remarks about the evil and self-interested nature of men, it is hard not to see a common core assumption between what Baron identified as the key element in civic humanism and Machiavelli's argument that all elements in the city must have their share for political life to function well, and his institutional solution of interdependent councils representing groups of differing class and wealth.

In 1971, Witt identified Leonardo Bruni as the first intellectual to articulate a synthetic and self-conscious conception of republican liberty. A central feature of Witt's discussion was Bruni's insistence on the equality of all citizens before the law, which Bruni argued was only attainable in a republic.<sup>38</sup> In his more recent discussion of Bruni's *Laudatio* in "*In the Footsteps of the Ancients*": *The Origins of Humanism from Lovato to Bruni*, Witt has urged us to take seriously Bruni's emphasis on consent and representation, at least as an ideal to be admired, if not a description of existing regimes.<sup>39</sup> There are clear continuities in spirit and purpose between Witt's Bruni and Machiavelli's insistence on a protected court of appeal and the right of the people's representatives to veto aristocratic legislation.

In *The Machiavellian Moment*, Pocock analyzed the distinctively Venetian achievement of having mechanized virtue, transforming it from a moral problem in the earlier humanist mold of individual character to a political problem resolved by intricately arranged political institutions.<sup>40</sup> Here too we see connections between Pocockian

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<sup>37</sup> Hans Baron, *The Crisis of the Early Italian Renaissance* (2 vols.; Princeton, 1955); Quentin Skinner, *Liberty Before Liberalism* (Cambridge, 1997); *idem*, *The Foundations of Modern Political Thought* (2 vols.; Cambridge, 1978), I: *The Renaissance*; *idem*, *Liberty Before Liberalism* (Cambridge, 1997); and *idem*, *Visions of Politics* (3 vols.; Cambridge, 2002). Although Skinner wrote that Renaissance republicanism focused on fostering virtue in individuals rather than institutions (*Foundations*, 44–45), his subsequent analyses of Machiavelli and the Renaissance tradition have consistently underscored institutional arrangements and collective structures of power.

<sup>38</sup> Ronald G. Witt, "The Rebirth of the Concept of Republican Liberty in Italy," in *Renaissance Studies in Honor of Hans Baron*, ed. Anthony Molho and John A. Tedeschi, (Dekalb, Ill., 1971), 199.

<sup>39</sup> Ronald G. Witt, "*In the Footsteps of the Ancients*": *The Origins of Humanism from Lovato to Bruni* (Leiden, 2000), 426–27.

<sup>40</sup> Pocock, *The Machiavellian Moment*, 272–332.

Venetian mechanized virtue and Machiavelli's self-perpetuating interdependent councils, which resolve the problem of factionalism and individual corruption. Machiavelli has organized the new republic "so that it administers itself" because it has "institutions that can by themselves stand firm."<sup>41</sup> At least in this case, Machiavelli seems to have been quite confident of his republic's ability to perpetuate itself through time.

## 2

A substantially different set of political assumptions emerges in the *Discorsi Palleschi*. At the heart of Machiavelli's system was the distribution of political influence, a structural approach to politics entirely consistent with guild-based vision of the *trecento*, yet articulated in terms of new institutions and new corporately conceived relationships to power for the city's three tiers of citizens. At the heart of the *Palleschi* system was the distribution of rewards, a patronage-based approach to politics entirely consistent with the traditional language of aristocratic hegemony from the age of Dante, before it had been forced into a dialogue of power with an upstart and audacious popular alternative. In contrast to Machiavelli's ambitious dismissal of Florence's traditional republican structures, the *Palleschi* all cautioned the Medici against innovative structures and institutions. And where Machiavelli envisioned an enduring regime, the *Palleschi* underscored the mutability and impermanence of aristocratic republicanism.

In 1522, five years before the third and final republican uprising, Alessandro Pazzi had already concluded that the best route to stability lay in satisfying the material interests of citizens. The city had hoped for lucrative preferments upon the elevation of Giovanni de' Medici to the papacy, but when the preferments failed to materialize in sufficient quantities, Pazzi recalled, Florentines became more disillusioned and bitter about Medici power than they had been before Leo took office, leading him to conclude that "men are more moved by results than they are by reason."<sup>42</sup> Pazzi went on to challenge

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<sup>41</sup> Machiavelli, "Discourse," 115.

<sup>42</sup> Pazzi, *Discorso di Alessandro de' Pazzi, al Cardinale Giulio de' Medici.—Anno 1512*, *ASI*, 1 (1842), 425: "Onde è occorso, che in nove anni in circa di questo pontificato,

other *Palleschi* who argued that “reason dictates that the people will never be pleased by a prince that they did not create”; according to Pazzi, it is possible to win over the people to a regime imposed by external powers—but one must do so by distributing lucrative favors to the right people.<sup>43</sup> For Pazzi, loyalty is merely the product of satisfied self-interest, and the major problem the Medici currently face is that loyalty is always expensive, and exceptionally so when the majority of the people are hostile and those who could be won over will demand payment. The Medici, in his judgment, simply do not have the kinds of friends that would enable them to hold on to the *stato* during difficult times because they did not disburse the kinds of favors upon which one could reasonably rely to transform the people into partisans.<sup>44</sup>

Nine years later, Roberto Acciaiuoli shared Pazzi’s view of the crucial relationship between material self-interest and regime loyalty, and his list of enemies of the Medici suggests that the former republican regime of 1527–30 may also have implicitly shared his view. In addition to what he referred to as the regime’s “natural enemies”—by which, the context suggests, he meant those opposed to Medici rule on ideological grounds—he added a number of people whose opposition was the result of having prospered economically under the republican regime. In particular, he referred to those who had purchased from the republic the confiscated goods of churches, monasteries, and guilds: assets that the Medici were certain to demand be returned to their original owners.<sup>45</sup>

Francesco Vettori also shared Pazzi’s understanding of citizen loyalty, though he was more optimistic about the prospects of buying key allies. Like the other *Palleschi*, he felt that the best way to hold people to the regime was to appeal to their material self-interest.

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la Città in fatto non avendo visti quelli frutti che sperava (movendosi assai li uomini universalmente più dallo evento che dalla ragione). . . .”

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, 430–31: “In modo che, io dissento da quelli che dicono altrimenti: perchè la ragione che allegano, di dire che mai potrà piacere al popolo il Principe che non avessi creato lui, non mi satisfa. . . .”

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, 426–27.

<sup>45</sup> Roberto Acciaiuoli, *Due pareri di Ruberto Acciaiuoli.—Anno 1531–32*, ASI, 1 (1842), 447. During the siege that ended the republic of 1527–30, the republican regime generated desperately-needed income by a levy of one-third of all ecclesiastical property, which the regime could seize and sell by compulsion, in addition to the seizure of gold plate, wood, and other commodities from Florentine churches and monasteries. On this, see Cecil Roth, *The Last Florentine Republic* (New York, 1925).



Vettori urged the Medici to create a small, trusted clique of partisans. The easiest way to do this, he argued, was to make the reward for holding a major office include *utile* as well as *honore*.<sup>46</sup> The major offices of the republic traditionally did not include salaries; the honor and status accrued by holding office was deemed a sufficient reward. The Medici therefore should pay an annual salary to key office-holders. They could create an adequate budget for this by abolishing the *Signoria*, a good idea in and of itself, since all the *Palleschi* (except Francesco Guicciardini) identified it as a persistent locus of anti-Medici agitation.<sup>47</sup>

Vettori's view of the essential self-interest of individuals extended even to his understanding of the stalwarts of the third republic, whose loyalty, in principle, could be purchased. Because their enemies, the *piagnoni* republicans, were people ruled over by their passions, Vettori argued, they could only be made trustworthy by giving them the highest offices in the new regime.<sup>48</sup> Unfortunately, this was impossible since those limited offices were the linchpins that connected the Medici to their inner circle. Nor was it possible to counter the dangers created by leaving their enemies unsatisfied by winning over the broad ranks of the people, the approach Machiavelli had favored for new princes.<sup>49</sup> During the fifteenth century, Cosimo and Lorenzo had counted on the support of the city's manual laborers, but as Vettori saw it, this was no longer possible. The love of the people for the principate, he argued, always proceeded from *utile*, and the Medici no longer had the wealth required to transform the workers into friends.<sup>50</sup> Vettori had no confidence in any Machiavellian system of interlocking and autonomous councils. Considering the vast number of their enemies and the depletion of Medici wealth by the war and the siege, Vettori concluded that the only real option was to hold the state by force.<sup>51</sup> We see, however, that his appeal to force was a last resort, motivated by a frank awareness of the precariousness of their position, rather than by the abstract and theoretical conviction described by Gilbert.

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<sup>46</sup> Vettori, *Tre pareri di Francesco Vettori*.—Anno 1531–32, *ASI*, 1 (1842), 434–35, 440.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, 433–34.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, 437–38.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, 438.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, 438.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, 438.

Roberto Acciaiuoli shared Vettori's understanding of the political motivation of individuals, even their opponents from the vanquished republic. He urged the Medici to re-establish the *squittinio* and *imbor-sazione a mano* so that they could purge suspects from key offices and replace them with friends, whose loyalty would be strengthened by attaching salaries to the offices.<sup>52</sup> In addition to rewarding established allies with paid offices, Acciaiuoli urged the Medici to use the same technique to win over the younger generation of aristocrats, those who had come of political age during the last four years. Unlike Vettori, however, Acciaiuoli felt that the new salaried offices should be paid for by punitive taxation on their enemies, a combination of innovative structures with time-honored Florentine traditions of dealing with vanquished foes.<sup>53</sup> Like Vettori, Acciaiuoli was pessimistic about winning the loyalty of the people outright, though he did feel that their dissatisfaction could be tempered by reducing their taxes. The lost revenues could easily be regained by abolishing the *guardia*, which would generate thirty thousand ducats annually.<sup>54</sup> In spite of these recommendations, however, Acciaiuoli was as pessimistic as Vettori about the possibility of containing their enemies. In addition to their "natural enemies" in the city, Acciaiuoli concluded that it was inevitable that they would create even more. Clement VII of course demanded that all church property that the republic had sold to finance their stand against the Medici be returned. Between those who had to return property and those whose republican pasts demanded that they be stripped of offices, the number of malcontents in the city would inevitably multiply, no matter the remedies the Medici tried.<sup>55</sup>

The most cynical and pessimistic of the group, Francesco Guicciardini advanced the same argument in the bleakest terms. Like Vettori and Acciaiuoli, Guicciardini emphasized the degree to which the Medici were establishing their authority in enemy territory; their enemies were an entire people, and because they were particularly opposed by the youth, the Medici would have people to fear in Florence for a hundred years.<sup>56</sup> Whereas Machiavelli had argued that

<sup>52</sup> Roberto Acciaiuoli, *Due pareri di Ruberto Acciaiuoli.—Anno 1531–32*, ASI, 447–48.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, 447.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, 450.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, 447.

<sup>56</sup> Francesco Guicciardini, *Discorso di Francesco Guicciardini.—A di 30 gennaio 1531–32*, ASI, 1 (1842), 454–55.

stability could be achieved by giving each social group its share in the regime, an argument built on the understanding of individuals as essentially political and rational, Guicciardini argued that no durable arrangement of interests could ever be made. Recent history persuaded him, much as it had Alessandro Pazzi, of the essential irrationality of most Florentines. Most men are imprudent and vain, Guicciardini argued, and they all aspire to the highest positions in government. When the honors they all feel they deserve fail to materialize, their disdain and discontent kindles a vindictive desire that is always their ruin; at the very least, their discontent makes them bold, not recognizing the value of the honors they have been given, and therefore threatening to the *stato*.<sup>57</sup>

Like the other *Palleschi*, Guicciardini felt the only way securely to bind the Medici and their allies in the city was with material satisfaction. However, where the other *Palleschi* merely argued that allies and potential friends should be rewarded for their support, Guicciardini argued that allies should be so excessively and ostentatiously rewarded that they become publicly hated. Only after they were forced to recognize that any shift in regime would immediately usher in their destruction would their long-term loyalty be secured.<sup>58</sup> So to the standard *Palleschi* argument of assuring support through *utile*, Guicciardini added the requirement that supporters must fear any regime that might follow the Medici.

Unlike his peers, Guicciardini did not demand the abolition of the *Signoria*, an issue he felt was largely inconsequential. Keeping it offered the minor advantage of having a few additional preferments to hand out.<sup>59</sup> Also unlike his peers Guicciardini felt the most important task was to abolish the Great Council and abandon completely what he considered the superfluous debates about how to modify it to meet Medici interests. In its place, Guicciardini suggested a *balia* of two hundred citizens, from which the Medici would select sixty to become principal members of the state. These sixty would be elected for life and would dominate the government, with the exception of external and minor offices, which would allow for the adequate distribution of benefits to the larger group of Medici allies. New members to the sixty would be promoted as the first council died off, which would

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<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, 455.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, 455–56.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, 458.

ensure in Medici supporters a certain amount of hope for promotion in a slow but steady and reliable process. From public funds, the sixty would be paid such lucrative salaries that there would be nothing they could do to atone for the sin of their affluence.<sup>60</sup> Guicciardini's solution, in spite of its extremity, had the advantage of freeing up the pope's Roman revenues, since it was imperative that the funds binding their allies to them be borne on the backs of Florentine citizens; only when the funds flowed directly from the city would the recipients of the salaries be adequately hated.<sup>61</sup>

Their vision of government as a mechanism for distributing *honore* and *utile* to supporters had more in common with older traditions of Florentine political thinking than it did with the new ways of thinking that Gilbert located in the meetings of the *Orti Oricellari*. In their narratives of the endemic factional disputes of Florentine history, the late medieval chroniclers described one regime after another that used control of the *stato* to distribute rewards and manage factions. It is a recurring theme in the writings of Marchionne di Coppo Stefani, Dino Compagni, Giovanni Villani, and even in Petrarch's analyses of Roman political struggles.<sup>62</sup> The recognition that such regimes were ubiquitous was of course not synonymous with approval. These writers all, implicitly or explicitly, lamented the absence of a larger notion of the common good that transcended factional advantage. But in the context of Gilbert's characterization of the innovative elements of aristocratic political thought, the substantial continuity in the regimes described in the chronicles and the *Discorsi Paleschi* merits particular emphasis.

The Medicean aristocrats were also generally consistent about avoiding innovative political structures. Alessandro Pazzi criticized Machiavelli's *discorso* for Leo precisely because it was untraditional and alien to the city, and hence extravagant.<sup>63</sup> The Medici were now more constrained than they had been in Cosimo and Lorenzo's day, in which the political discord that preceded their rule made the

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<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, 457.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, 458.

<sup>62</sup> For a more detailed discussion of these sources, see J. K. Hyde, "Contemporary Views of Faction and Civil Strife in Thirteenth- and Fourteenth-Century Italy," in *Violence and Civil Disorder in Italian Cities, 1200–1500*, ed. Lauro Martines (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1972), 296–302; and Mark Jurdjevic, "Trust in Renaissance Electoral Politics," *Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, 34 (2004), 601–14.

<sup>63</sup> Pazzi, *Discorso*, ASI, 1 (1842), 429.

future direction of political change less predictable. As Pazzi saw it, the resurrection of the Great Council in 1494 had inspired Florentines to view any future changes as leading to a state attached in some substantial way to the Great Council.<sup>64</sup> For Pazzi, the failure of the Soderini regime was more the result of the standard-bearer's personality than it was of institutional failings. Because the structure of Soderini's republic was solid and the Great Council was accepted and welcomed, the current enemies of the Medici had obvious and recent republican institutions to fall back on if the Medici faltered, a problem Cosimo and Lorenzo did not have to face.<sup>65</sup> Pazzi argued, therefore, that the Medici should co-opt those institutions and build a regime around the office of standard-bearer for life and the Great Council. To the standard-bearer and council, he added a mechanism for aristocratic dominance, a lifetime senate that would have a monopoly on the most important tasks, such as the nomination of magistrate, ambassadors, and commissaries. This system would prevent their opponents from agitating for popular reforms by demanding the reinstatement of the Great Council. Furthermore, Pazzi argued, his system of arranging for a closed aristocratic regime was entirely traditional, since even before Cosimo's time the city had been long accustomed to rule by a few, even if the few ruled through a popular form of government.<sup>66</sup>

Luigi Guicciardini also argued for moderate changes, installing a Medici duke in place of the *Signoria* and balancing the duke's authority with a supreme council of thirty or forty citizens. Beyond those two significant changes, Luigi cautioned against altering the traditional structure of any of the minor magistracies.<sup>67</sup> He shared his peers' concerns about the *guardia*, but rather than abolish it, he argued that it should be retained with greater numbers of troops under the command of a foreigner, a fusion of the traditional *podestà* and *otto di guardia*.<sup>68</sup> Vettori urged similar changes as Guicciardini, and echoed Pazzi's conviction that the model of Medici government established by Cosimo and Lorenzo was no longer viable because the Great

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*, 420–21.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*, 426.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*, 428–31.

<sup>67</sup> Luigi Guicciardini, *Discorso di Luigi Guicciardini al Duca Alessandro.—Anno 1531–32*, *ASI*, 1 (1842), 464–65.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*, 465.

Council had given new structure and substance to the republic. Because the priors of the *Signoria* were in each other's presence all day and had access to the city's bell, Vettori reasoned, they always had the potential for sustained deliberation and the ability to summon the people. For this reason, he urged the abolition of the *Signoria*, redistributing its functions to the *otto di guardia* and *otto di pratica*, who were in each other's presence only four hours a day and whose work kept them distracted by a steady flow of human traffic.<sup>69</sup>

One final area of analysis in which Gilbert identified the Medicean "prophets of force" with political innovation was in the devaluation of trade, though in this case their position contradicted, rather than grew out of, *quattrocento* humanism.<sup>70</sup> The humanists of the fifteenth century had celebrated merchants and mercantile wealth as indispensable safeguards of the republic, but, Gilbert argued, this view became untenable in the 1520s, when the need for autonomy, arms, and military force compelled the aristocrats to reverse the fifteenth-century arguments.<sup>71</sup> They now viewed the military profession as the most important for the well-being of society, while trade and the pursuit of commerce now made "men unfit for government and politics."<sup>72</sup> Gilbert cited Antonio Brucioli's dialogue *Della Repubblica* as the best example of this new sentiment, but did not cite the lesser examples.<sup>73</sup>

Here too the *Discorsi Palleschi* suggest a different conclusion about the advocates of aristocratic republicanism. They did underscore the significance of military power, but they all insisted that promoting trade was the first and indispensable step to anchoring Medici power.

<sup>69</sup> Vettori, *Tre pareri*, 434.

<sup>70</sup> Gilbert, *Machiavelli and Guicciardini*, 152.

<sup>71</sup> On Florentine traditions placing wealth at the heart of civic life, see Mark Jurdjevic, "Virtue, Commerce, and the Enduring Florentine Moment: Reintegrating Italy into the Atlantic Republican Debate," *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 62 (2001), 721–43; and Cary Nederman, "Commercial Society and Republican Government in the Latin Middle Ages: The Economic Dimensions of Brunetto Latini's Republicanism," *Political Theory*, 31 (2003), 644–63; but see as a counter-example Lawrin Armstrong, "Usury, Conscience, and Public Debt: Angelo Corbinelli's Testament of 1419," *A Renaissance of Conflicts: Visions and Revisions of Law and Society in Italy and Spain*, ed. John A. Marino and Thomas Kuehn (Toronto, 2004), 173–214.

<sup>72</sup> Gilbert, *Machiavelli and Guicciardini*, 152.

<sup>73</sup> Gilbert, *Machiavelli and Guicciardini*, 151; on Brucioli see Delio Cantimori, "Rhetoric and Politics in Italian Humanism," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, 1 (1937–38), 83–102.

Brucioli, in this respect, may be more an exception than the rule, especially considering that Medici supporters addressed the particular context of state-building in poverty. The war and siege of 1527–30 had depleted the resources of Florence and the Medici alike, and rebuilding Medici influence and power was directly related to re-establishing Florentine prosperity. None of the Medici theorists felt that the Medici could ignore the glaring issue of the city's finances, no matter how good their relations with mercenary armies and no matter how big the city's prisons. High on the list of Pazzi's enumeration of dangers the Medici faced were the consequences of their dependence on imperial power and their alliance with the emperor. This did more than grate on traditional Florentine Guelph sensibilities: it disrupted the normally voluminous trade between Florentine citizens and French merchants. He urged the Medici to remember the example of Lorenzo, who temporarily lost control of the state in part because of his negligence towards the family's finances, which forced him to raid the city's funds.<sup>74</sup> Luigi Guicciardini warned Alessandro de' Medici against attempting to establish an absolute principate, since doing so would cause the best citizens to abandon the city and trade would suffer, which the Medici could not afford.<sup>75</sup> Francesco Guicciardini explained to Alessandro that the current ubiquity of poverty was a major problem. The Medici would not be able to shore up their position in the city without a substantial income; since the sinews of that income consisted of the city itself, he must do everything in his power to improve its industry and trade immediately. Like his brother Luigi, he warned against attempting to establish an absolute principate on the grounds that it would necessarily involve crushing the city's income and chasing away its industries.<sup>76</sup>

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It might be objected that the methodology here has been flawed from the outset, since it relies on writings born of exceptional and constraining circumstances. All of the *discorsi* were commissioned by

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<sup>74</sup> Pazzi, *Discorso*, *ASI*, 1 (1842), 422.

<sup>75</sup> L. Guicciardini, *Discorso*, *ASI*, 1 (1842), 464.

<sup>76</sup> F. Guicciardini, *Discorso*, *ASI*, 1 (1842), 456.

the Medici, which had to affect and inform their content, and those of Vettori, Acciaiuoli, and the Guicciardini brothers were composed in the turbulence of stark post-war conditions. I would argue, however, that the circumstances surrounding the composition of these *discorsi* make them more likely, rather than less so, to reveal and expose their authors' core assumptions and convictions. In Florentine political historiography, the most influential and controversial moments have always been dynamically linked to existential crises and the turmoil of war: Baron's civic humanism emerged after the Florentine republic faced extinction at the hands of a foreign army; Pocock's sociology of liberty and mechanized virtue emerged after Florence lost its autonomy, confronting yet again the temporality and vulnerability of republics; Gilbert's aristocrats in the Rucellai gardens created a modern political science as a way of understanding and responding to their political failures. Pazzi, Vettori, Acciaiuoli, and the Guicciardini all shared the firm belief that their own fate and prosperity in Florence had become inextricably attached to the Medici—their discussions of how to secure Medici power in Florence were simultaneously discussions of how to ensure their own futures there. Like Baron's Bruni, writing in the midst of victory but acutely conscious of the republic's fragility, these aristocrats were writing as victors, and although their victory was not entirely unexpected, they were more aware of the fragility of their power in 1530 than at any previous moment. They could not afford to make political recommendations that they considered unreasonable or unfeasible merely because doing so might be flattering to or expected by Clement VII.

Because of Machiavelli's fame and the more recent influence of Pocock's work on Florentine political thought and the republican tradition, we tend to think of the late *quattrocento* and early *cinquecento* in terms of a "Machiavellian moment." But in an important and rarely appreciated sense, the era between the first expulsion of the Medici in 1494 and their final return in 1530 might more accurately be understood as a "Guicciardinian moment." John McCormick, from whom I borrow this term, has recently made a persuasive plea for recognizing that the Machiavellian aspects of political thought in this period had less of an immediate impact than the Guicciardinian.<sup>77</sup>

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<sup>77</sup> John McCormick, "Machiavelli Against Republicanism: On the Cambridge School's 'Guicciardinian Moments,'" *Political Theory*, 31 (2003), 615–43.



McCormick makes two points. First, the Guicciardinian, elitist model of political organization prevailed over the Machiavellian, egalitarian model—that is, the new Medici dukes established a polity in which the ruler allied with the aristocrats to exclude the middle-ranks, whereas Machiavelli urged new princes to do the opposite, making allies of the people to exclude the nobility. Second, in the intellectual exchange between Machiavelli and Guicciardini, the only influence Machiavelli exerted on Guicciardini was to reinforce and exaggerate Guicciardini's elitist convictions.<sup>78</sup> Pocock would have seen the awkward implications that the historical triumph of Guicciardini's approach to Florentine politics posed for his thesis, McCormick suggests, if he had concentrated on social and institutional arrangements over issues of temporality and endurance.<sup>79</sup> Guicciardini, Pocock argued, was less inclined to speculation on questions of fortune and decay because he and the *ottimati* belonged to an elite sufficiently powerful that they did not feel the need to meditate on insecurity.<sup>80</sup>

The constitutional *discorsi* of the *Palleschi* statesmen suggest that McCormick's argument for a "Guicciardinian moment" is as valid on the question of temporality and endurance as it is for social and institutional arrangements. Florentine historiography has generally described the late *trecento* and *quattrocento* as a period of the steady eradication of the popular guild republic by an oligarchic elitist republicanism.<sup>81</sup> Looking back over that same period, the Medici's aristocratic supporters concluded that whatever victories they had achieved in that era were relatively superficial, easily undone and built on fragile foundations. Each of the *Palleschi* constitutionalists advanced an interpretation of Florentine history in which political flux and change inherently tended away from their model and towards popular regimes, in which the fragility of the aristocratic model's stability and power dictated that it could not endure, and in which they sought to establish a compromise arrangement that they recognized could not evade decay, but might merely stave it off for as long as possible. The existential crisis of the Machiavellian moment

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*, 621–22.

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*, 620–21.

<sup>80</sup> Pocock, *The Machiavellian Moment*, 156.

<sup>81</sup> Najemy, *Corporatism and Consensus*; *idem*, "Dialogue of Power"; Hankins, "'Baron Thesis' after Forty Years"; and more generally, Lauro Martines, *Power and Imagination: City-States in Renaissance Italy* (Baltimore, 1988), 62–71.

is just as evident for the aristocratic republicans, who, after all, could not have known that Florence's future would follow in the absolutist paths found almost everywhere in early modern Europe and whose familiarity with their city's history suggested that it was only a matter of time before the pendulum swung back from the oligarchic to the popular pole. We know that the third republic was in fact Florence's last republican episode, but the lessons of Florentine history taught the *Palleschi* that political change naturally tended towards popular expressions of power.

The *discorsi* speak with one voice on the greater challenges and dangers faced by the Medici in the sixteenth century than Lorenzo had faced in the fifteenth, but they all emphasize the essential fragility even of Lorenzo's hold on the state.<sup>82</sup> In spite of Lorenzo's success and good fortune, Pazzi pointed out more than once, in spite of having the right opportunities, his brilliance, and his friends, he still had to labor intensely to hold the regime together. The *Palleschi* were fortunate that in Lorenzo they had a leader of incredible energy, patience, ingenuity, and a near divine amount of good fortune in foreign affairs. Even under those propitious circumstances, however, and benefiting from the solid foundation laid by Cosimo, Lorenzo had to involve himself in every little detail, public and private, in the *piazza* and the *palazzo*. The challenges faced by the Medici now are greater still: where Lorenzo had Cosimo's system in place, the *cinquecento* Medici have to face reinvigorated republican institutions; where the scale of Lorenzo's context was sufficiently small that he could intervene in all Florentine matters, now the involvement of the Medici in papal politics prevented them from keeping such a close eye on Florentine affairs. The fifteenth-century Medici faced a less difficult task than Alessandro now faced, the *Palleschi* agreed, even though that earlier regime had faced several conspiracies, challenges, and revolts, and although it had lasted only 60 years.<sup>83</sup>

Alessandro Pazzi and Francesco Vettori wrote that political change in Florentine affairs always tended towards more popular regimes. They both advocated establishing life terms for major offices, on the

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<sup>82</sup> As do the Medicean *pareri* reprinted in the appendices of Albertini's *Das Florentinische Staatsbewusstsein*.

<sup>83</sup> On these challenges, see Nicolai Rubinstein, *The Government of Florence Under the Medici (1434–1494)*, 2nd ed. (Oxford, 1997), 155–98, 223–26, 264–72.

assumption that the rotation of office was a catalyst for change and should therefore be kept to a minimum. Roberto Acciaiuoli began his *parere* by warning the Medici that no advice or particular strategy would enable the family to maintain its power permanently. By following his recommendations they at least had the chance to stave off popular reform for a long while, but the regime's eventual demise was inevitable. Even following his judgment, however, the odds of success in reinstalling the Medici were slim. Dangers and vulnerability were ubiquitous: the only stability the *Palleschi* currently enjoyed was directly dependent on the life of Duke Alessandro and the as-yet-untested loyalty of his personal bodyguard of five hundred soldiers; the death of Clement would most likely create chaos in Florence, since the soldiers in the city would have no clear indication of which faction to follow; the long siege had depleted Medici funds and bankrupted the city; the succession crisis facing the family made it difficult for those citizens inclined to sympathize with the Medici to feel safe in declaring their allegiance; the *guardia* and Medici forces in the city were inadequate to put down a popular revolt. In the midst of these dangers, Acciaiuoli conceded that he lacked the vision to penetrate such darkness and find a reliable way out. The republican uprising of 1527 had revealed that the Florentine people did not trust the Medici, and, as he saw it, that fact would perpetually remain the greatest weakness of their state: "where there is no confidence, there can be no love, on either side."<sup>84</sup>

Guicciardini was no less pessimistic than Acciaiuoli and Vettori. By its nature, he wrote, power is slippery and difficult, and arranging the constitution so that it will be useful to the Medici without alienating prominent citizens is impossible. Alessandro faced two essentially insoluble problems. The trauma of the siege had irreversibly alienated the city, so that the vast majority of citizens would never be won over to the Medici cause, no matter how great the benefits and *utile* offered. The fragility of the current situation qualified their power in many respects and would be their undoing unless they could find a way to shore up support. Any chance of doing so required considerable funds, but due to the poverty of the times it remained highly unlikely that such funds could be found. Taxing the few remaining wealthy citizens was the only apparent option, but it

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<sup>84</sup> Acciaiuoli, *Discorso*, *ASI*, 1 (1842), 449.

was also a self-defeating one, since those were the very citizens the Medici wished to win over. In principle, Guicciardini suggests, if Alessandro could govern in the same manner as had Cosimo and Lorenzo, with the same level of acuity and diligence, he would have no need of other methods. An ideal prince would find a way through the dangers, Guicciardini points out: “he who distributes honors and rewards well, pays attention to details, and knows how to take advantage of and exploit all opportunities, will create the effects he wishes.”<sup>85</sup> But of course such a prince would not have needed the *pareri* of the party’s lieutenants, “nor can one hope for such diligence in the age of the duke,” Guicciardini concludes, ending an obviously awkward subject by intimating, as had Pazzi, that the scale of Florentine politics had escalated beyond the reliable scrutiny of a single man.<sup>86</sup>

The political implications of humanist habits of thinking that Gilbert associated with aristocratic political thought in the sixteenth century seem more apparent in Machiavelli’s vision for Medici power in Florence than they do in the visions of his aristocratic contemporaries. For aristocratic republicans like the Guicciardini brothers, Vettori, Acciaiuoli, and Pazzi, attempting to envision Medici power in terms of ducal and senatorial divisions of power, humanism had less to offer as a conceptual and rhetorical device than Gilbert suggested.

What do we make of such an observation? It should be recognized that since we are comparing a philosophical movement of the fifteenth century with political theories of the sixteenth, we are considering the relationship obliquely, in terms of humanism’s legacy and lingering implications. Without wishing to stake too bold a claim on the conclusions reached here, I would argue that the absence of humanist assumptions in the *Discorsi Paleschi* implicitly affirms the style of thinking about humanism of scholars such as Baron, Witt, and Pocock, who, each in a different way, identify as a distinctive trait of humanism: its ability to speak directly to and capture the imagination of engaged, participatory political actors. The Medicean aristocrats were imagining political communities built around hierarchical relationships of power, understood in terms of force, dom-

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<sup>85</sup> F. Guicciardini, *Discorso, ASI*, 1 (1842), 456: “Perchè, chi distribuissi bene gli utili e gli onori, avvertissi a tutti i particolari, e sapessi far capitale di ogni cosa e pigliar bene tutte le occasioni, farebbe gli effetti volessi. . . .”

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*: “. . . ma questa diligenza così minuta, non si può sperare nell’ età del Duca. . . .”

inance, and submission, rather than horizontal and collective relationships of power, and it is primarily for this reason that the humanist language of politics seemed to offer them so little by way of conceptual vocabulary.

From the point of view of historical context, rather than of political theory, they remind us of the contingency of the triumph of Medici absolutism in Florence and Tuscany. The clarity of vision provided by hindsight is part of the romantic characterization of this period as the swan song of republican liberty in Florence, a watershed moment in the transition from the age of civism to the age of absolutism.<sup>87</sup> And indeed, it was—but understanding the period entirely in these terms perhaps misstates the way in which it was understood at the time. The intellectual heart of Pocock's "Machiavellian moment" is the existential crisis of a republic confronting its own mortality and temporal finitude; and that moment of doubt was the product of a new historical consciousness. But the lessons of Florentine history had a different moral for the Guicciardini brothers and their allies. These lessons taught them the essential fragility and impermanence of princely structures of power, at least in the Florentine context. By the sixteenth century, they had understood and accepted that their aristocratic vision of republicanism, in which they provided the steering wheel of the ship of state, could only exist in a Florence with the Medici at the apex. All the attempts to build such a regime without the Medici had failed. But the republics of 1494–1512 and 1527–30 gave them little cause for optimism that a successful and stable method existed for reintroducing the Medici into Florentine politics. Identifying the political crisis of the sixteenth century in Florence as a "Machiavellian moment" rightly emphasizes important aspects of political thinking at the time, but we should not forget the existence of an equally pervasive "Guicciardian moment," an aristocratic existential crisis more anxious and more aware of fragility than its more celebrated popular counterpart.

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<sup>87</sup> On the romantic treatment of this era, see Gino Capponi's introduction to the *Discorsi Paleschi*; Cecil Roth, *The Last Florentine Republic* (New York, 1925); Ferdinand Schevill, *Medieval and Renaissance Florence* (2 vols.; New York, 1961); and, despite his protestations to the contrary, Eric Cochrane, *Florence in the Forgotten Centuries 1527–1800* (Chicago, 1973).



CHAPTER SIX

THE PROBLEM OF COUNSEL REVISITED ONCE MORE:  
BUDÉ'S *DE ASSE* (1515) AND *UTOPIA I* (1516)  
IN DEFINING A POLITICAL MOMENT

John M. Headley\*

The appearance of still another paper pertaining to More's *Utopia* warrants explanation, even apology. For it would appear that too many words have already been expended on the subject. And yet the issue of counsel, of princely counsel, if placed in a context of contemporary European agitation and concern, would seem to invite further attention. Moreover the opportunity specifically afforded and even the necessity impelling the educated—and most especially those enjoying a new form of intellectual instruction—to lend their services

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The following abbreviations will be used throughout:

Allen: *Opus epistolarum Des. Erasmi Roterodami*, ed. P. S. Allen et al., 12 vols. (Oxford, 1906–58).

BN: Bibliothèque nationale, *Guillaume Budé* (Paris, 1968).

CWE: *The Collected Works of Erasmus: Correspondence*, tr. R. A. B. Mynors et al. (Toronto, 1974–).

CWM: *The Yale Edition of the Complete Works of St. Thomas More* (14 vols.; New Haven, 1963–97).

*De asse*: Coelius Secundus Curio, ed., *G. Budaei operum Tomos II in quo de asse et partibus eius libri V continentur* (4 vols.; Basel: Nicolaus Episcopius Junior, 1557).

*Mor.*: Marie-Madeleine de La Garanderie, "La correspondance de Guillaume Budé et de Thomas More," *Moreana*, 19–20 (1968), 39–68.

*Phil.*: *Guillaume Budé: Philologie/De Philologia*, ed. and tr. Marie-Madeleine de La Garanderie (Paris, 2001).

Rogers: *The Correspondence of Sir Thomas More*, ed. Elizabeth Frances Rogers (Princeton, 1947).

*SL*: *St. Thomas More: Selected Letters*, ed. Elizabeth Frances Rogers (New Haven, 1967).

to the guidance of a rapidly expanding human government present the perduring problem: the role and the suitability of the intellectual in politics. As counselor to the prince, or to government at any time, is the scholar-humanist of philosophical cast, the reflective intellectual, an unfortunate, perhaps impossible mix? To what extent does the matter depend upon the specific historical context and the express intent of the particular individual involved?

Indeed at the beginning of the sixteenth century the best minds of Europe's emerging intellectual community seem to have been drawn to this issue as if to some charmed chalice. In the same year that saw the *editio princeps* of More's *Utopia*, Baldassare Castiglione completed the first redaction of his *Il libro del Cortegiano*, which would ultimately conclude with an extended treatment of counseling the prince. Likewise the publication of Erasmus's *Institutio principis Christiani* made 1516 something of an *annus mirabilis*: princes, their instruction, and instructors seem to be on the mind of political Europe. At the same time, if not the very same year, Guillaume Budé would complete his *De l'institution du prince*, although it was not published until 1547.<sup>1</sup> And similar to Budé's own recognition of Francis I's advent, Claude de Seyssel completed his *Monarchie de France* in April 1515 for presentation to the new and hope-invested king of France.<sup>2</sup> The instruction of the ruler appeared to call for an education or reeducation of the nobility, both old and new.<sup>3</sup>

What concerns us here is the apparent parallelism in the political experience of Thomas More and Guillaume Budé in the period 1515 to 1518, an early meeting of minds, the commonality of their respective contexts, their anxieties about government service, yet their inevitable divergence after 1520. Consider the following evidence: Budé, abruptly electrified by the advent of Francis I in 1515 with

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<sup>1</sup> The usual date given for its composition is 1519. However Milosch Triwunatz, *Guillaume Budé's "De l'institution du prince": Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der Renaissancebewegung in Frankreich* (Erlangen, 1903), 17 and 23, asserts 1516, and Timothy Hampton, *Writing from History: The Rhetoric of Exemplarity in Renaissance Literature* (Ithaca, N.Y., 1990), 34, hazards 1517, apparently in an effort to draw its composition back and associate it with the advent of Francis I and the opportunities mirrored in the Epilogue of the *De asse*.

<sup>2</sup> Claude de Seyssel, *The Monarchy of France*, tr. J. H. Hexter, ed. Donald R. Kelley (New Haven, 1981), 7, 26.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. J. H. Hexter, "The Education of the Aristocracy in the Renaissance," in *idem, Reappraisals in History* (Aberdeen, 1961), 45-70.



its consequent opportunities afforded to politics and learning, publishes his *De asse et partibus eius* on March 15 of that year.<sup>4</sup> On a diplomatic mission to Bruges, More completes Book II of *Utopia* in September 1515 and returns to England that autumn, contemplating entry into the royal council. Then More, resorting to the dialogue form, composes Book I of *Utopia*, completed in September of 1516.<sup>5</sup> At some time in the period March 1515 to August 1518 More reads the *De asse* and opens his correspondence with Budé at that last date by announcing his profound respect for and even appropriation of the work's import.<sup>6</sup> By this time both have gravitated into government service with their respective monarchs and convene in June 1520 at the Field of Cloth-of-Gold for their one and only meeting. More and Erasmus, Budé and Erasmus, even Budé and Calvin have received ample attention. Yet to my own knowledge there exists no extended analysis of the relationship between More and Budé, which nevertheless better invites attention.

While both humanists came from backgrounds of legal training and experience as well as a tradition of family service to their respective monarchies, Budé's heritage far exceeded that of More in extent and importance. Since the mid-fourteenth century his ancestors had been in continuous service to the French crown, holding distinguished places in the central administration.<sup>7</sup> Budé himself would maintain this legacy, serving in an embassy to Pope Julius II in 1505, his judicial and administrative expertise being called upon frequently—among other issues, for the investigation into the treason of the Constable de Bourbon (1524) and for the final process against Louis de Berquin (1529).<sup>8</sup> This august record of his own as well as his family's service to the crown needs to be kept in mind for moderating our judgment of his criticism of the court and of public service. Yet unquestionably his heart lay with the new learning ever since that moment

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<sup>4</sup> BN, 14, #51. Because of the greater availability of the *De asse* in the Basel *opera omnia* through its 1966 facsimile publication, all references will initially be to this edition, although checked against the first two editions, those of 1515 and 1516, both by Josse Badius Ascensius and both available to More.

<sup>5</sup> CWM, IV, xv–xvi.

<sup>6</sup> *SL*, 107–9.

<sup>7</sup> Roland Mousnier, *Le conseil du roi de Louis XII à la Révolution* (Paris, 1970), 46–51, 277–92, 339.

<sup>8</sup> David O. McNeil, *Guillaume Budé and Humanism in the Reign of Francis I* (Geneva, 1975), 103–4, 118–22.

in 1491 when, at the age of twenty-three, while presumably studying law at Orléans, but actually pursuing with alarming avidity hunting and horsemanship, he suddenly broke with these consuming passions to throw himself with similar intensity into the study of the classics and most especially Greek, whereby he would rise through almost demonic application to become France's leading Hellenist. By his *Annotationes in Pandectas* (1508) he served to establish the new historical school of reading Roman law—the *mos gallicus*;<sup>9</sup> with *De asse*, his greatest and most notable work, although today hardly ever read or consulted, he acquired that international eminence as a scholar and Hellenist that would distinguish him and forever ornament the reign of his king.

The purpose of the present inquiry is not to argue for any specific influence or inducement to dialogue by Budé upon More, although such a possibility cannot be entirely ruled out and certainly lends itself to future, close philological analysis. The attempt here seeks only to open up a subject that seems to have been neglected and to leave to those more competent the intricacies and technicalities of examining comparative styles in Renaissance rhetoric and Latinity. Besides noting a number of commonalities in the development of More and Budé in this crucial period of 1515–20, the present enterprise focuses upon the harsh imperatives of the political for the early sixteenth-century humanist as well as the appropriate role of the intellectual in the courtly milieu with its possibility for influencing the prince. As Thomas More is better known to most of us than is Guillaume Budé, the case of More on this issue will first be considered, and, after looking at their correspondence as a means of providing the contextual basis for their similar experience, problems, and frustration, this study will then turn to the less familiar case of Budé, as represented in his respective, contemporaneous work on the relationship between prince and humanist.

At the very outset of his intellectual career More had firmly engaged the perennial problem of the learned—the delights of study in the removes of contemplation versus political involvement in government service. After 1505, in his reconstruction of Pico della Mirandola as

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<sup>9</sup> Donald R. Kelley, *Foundations of Modern Historical Scholarship: Language, Law, and History in the French Renaissance* (New York, 1970), 53–85, 91–97.

the ideal lay intellectual at a time when More himself had decisively abandoned the possibilities of the monastic vocation for legal involvement, marriage, and a household, the Pican material he chooses for translation and consideration includes Pico's lengthy reply to a letter from Andrea Corneo, the Urbino humanist and translator of Lucan's *Paraste*.<sup>10</sup> Corneo had counseled Pico to leave the isolation of his studies and seek meaningful assignment among some of the princes of Italy. While rejecting as monstrous any sort of compartmentalization of philosophy away from politics, Pico admits the worth of learning in the personal cultivation of noblemen and presumably for the politically active.<sup>11</sup> Yet in his response More, trimming and adding occasionally to Pico's text, has the admired philosopher claim, quite contrary to his actual argument: "I am content ye study but I would have you outwardly occupied also. . . . Love them and use them both as well study as worldly occupation."<sup>12</sup> Both additions run counter to Pico's own intent, summed up thus:

I therefore abyding fermely in this opinion: set more bi my little house/my study/the pleasure of my bokes/y<sup>c</sup> rest and peace of my mynde: then by all your kingis palacis/all your commune besines/all your glory/all the aduantage that ye hawke afir/and all the fauoure of the court.<sup>13</sup>

From the outset the court, as the preeminent context for government service, and the role of the courtier engage the attention of Thomas More. If the raw material of a princely councilor is the inevitable courtier, we can begin by attending More's earliest perception of this creature. As a lad of twelve at the table of Cardinal Morton, he had early noted and would later report on the flatterers and trimmers courting the approval of the great lord.<sup>14</sup> In More's epigrams the courtier is represented as one overly confident in what is actually a precarious relationship with his king: fun with tamed lions can suddenly turn fatal when the lion roars in rage. Here anxiety outweighs pleasure; better to remain safe and apart.<sup>15</sup> In his construction of the deathbed speech of Edward IV in his *Richard III*,

<sup>10</sup> CWM, I, 85–88, 232–33.

<sup>11</sup> CWM, I, xlvi.

<sup>12</sup> CWM, I, 86, lines 5–9.

<sup>13</sup> CWM, I, 87, lines 20–24.

<sup>14</sup> CWM, IV, 80–81, lines 19–22.

<sup>15</sup> CWM, III, pt. 2, n. 162.

More endows the dying king with the awareness that when dissension prevails, partisan interests displace any efforts for the truth, and advice becomes what is pleasant, not profitable, in order to advance one's own faction in the favor of the prince.<sup>16</sup> A violent instability distinguishes the political. There is no law so certain, no counselor so trustworthy that can be ultimately relied upon—not even Cardinal Morton, for all his prudence.<sup>17</sup>

By 1516 the remove from counsel and court that More had earlier advocated was beginning to wear thin. He experienced the tugs both subtle and unsubtle drawing him to the vortex of advancement. Nevertheless in embarking upon the problem of royal service and the existential reality that would lead to the creation of the *Utopia*, More lost none of his caution and distrust, his anxiety and inner distance. In his masterpiece but most especially in its first book, the *Dialogue of Counsel*, largely composed between September 1515 and the following January,<sup>18</sup> the profoundly dilemmatic nature of counsel and courtly survival would be played out in all its tensions and ironies. The recourse to dialogue at this stage appears as a remarkably fateful and appropriate move. For as has been perceptively noted, humanist dialogue distinguished itself from rhetorical discourse as well as scholastic disputation by being less concerned with persuasive exposition of an argument or the victory of one party over another than with the creative interaction of both participants as a means to a fuller understanding of an issue. More sought “to locate a point at which the life of reflection and the life of civic responsibility might touch.”<sup>19</sup>

The superb mastery of dialogue evinced by *Utopia*, Book I, achieves such an end. If only as an appropriate corrective to the sixteenth century's unwarranted omission of Book I from the early vernacular translations—the German, the Italian, the Spanish<sup>20</sup>—Book II, with its monologue, can afford to be dismissed from present consideration. For More's handling of dialogue in the first book and at the work's end dramatizes the dilemma of politics and of the intel-

<sup>16</sup> CWM, XV, 330–31.

<sup>17</sup> Gerard Wegemer, *Thomas More on Statesmanship* (Washington, D.C., 1996), 70–71.

<sup>18</sup> Dominic Baker-Smith, *More's Utopia* (New York, 1991), 116.

<sup>19</sup> Baker-Smith, 21.

<sup>20</sup> R. S. Sylvester, “‘Si Hythlodaeo credimus’: Vision and Revision in Thomas More's *Utopia*,” *Soundings*, 51 (1968), 272–89, at 275.

lectual as government servant. In the elaborate, intense discussion and exchange between Hythloday and Morus, the fictive More, Hythloday seems to prevail with his consistent abstention from and distrust of royal service, checking Morus at every point. In one instance, however, the latter manages to trump the argument of the learned stranger: namely, if Hythloday's favorite philosopher, Plato, enjoins that only when philosophers become kings or vice versa will commonwealths be properly ruled, then what prospect of such rule when philosophers will themselves not condescend even to impart their counsel to kings?<sup>21</sup> From this position Morus will later conclude that the ship is not to be abandoned in a storm just because one cannot control the winds; what cannot be turned to an ideal or absolute good must be made as little bad as possible.<sup>22</sup> With that pronouncement Morus becomes Thomas More, who now chooses to enter royal service despite its perilous shoals. The fateful decision attained after long, intense inner debate would determine the rest of his life.

And yet before proceeding further, some assessment of More's view of politics must be taken. Insofar as More can be understood as committed to a politics of small, even minute gains over against possibly large losses, his essential understanding of the political, attained at this time, would seem to recognize its basic ambiguities and uncertainties and to distance itself from any commitment to a grand plan. In short, given the radicalism of a politics of faith as understood and mediated by Hythloday in his commitment to a communism of property, More affirms a politics of skepticism where the ideals of reason and harmony, given the intractable nature of the human material, can never be realized and presumably, if rigidly applied, can only lead to worse conditions.<sup>23</sup> Only if we can distance More from the imaginary dishes Hythloday serves up in Book II of *Utopia* can we begin to deal with More the courtier, lawyer, politician, and counselor. No need to lose time and mentation over the ideals of communism, toleration, and rationality in squaring each with More, particularly following the impact of Luther, but also at any time in his career after 1516. Such ideals and fancies belong to

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<sup>21</sup> CWM, IV, 86, lines 10–13; 87, lines 11–15.

<sup>22</sup> CWM, IV, 99–101.

<sup>23</sup> Baker-Smith, 34; cf. Michael Oakeshott, *The Politics of Faith and the Politics of Scepticism* (New Haven, 1996), 77–83, 132–33.

a *jeu d'esprit* of 1515 and do not speak to the realities of the dawning sixteenth century. More is too sophisticated a lawyer, counselor, and politician to attempt a politics of faith with all its indiscriminate bluntness and groundless, if appealing, ideals; rather a politics of skepticism, demanding a rhetoric of persuasion, finesse, and the intricacies of dialogue speaks to the occasion. Hythloday's faith-based initiative with its commitment to a planned society has here no place. Yet More's apparent recognition that the Hythlodays of this world are ever present, and the political contamination of the latter politics by that of faith, prevent any easy dismissal of Hythloday, who will timelessly continue to accentuate the lures and complexity of politics despite the impossibility of his ideal. Indeed *Utopia's* most sophisticated contemporary reader, Guillaume Budé, had it right when in his prefatory letter he emphasized the fictional frame to the work, first, by recognizing Hythloday as "the real builder of the Utopian city," howsoever correct and useful the institutions of this nursery; secondly, by pressing the reiterated suppositional, *si Hythlodaeo credimus*, "if we are to believe Hythloday"; and thirdly, by affirming that Utopia is not simply a nowhere land but a Never-Land.<sup>24</sup>

It has recently been perceptively questioned whether in returning to England in October of 1515 More engaged in weighing the pros and cons of entry into government service as Hexter had claimed.<sup>25</sup> For in fact by February of the following year Andreas Ammonius reported that More was breathlessly attendant upon Wolsey.<sup>26</sup> As Elton had earlier objected, More's entry must be placed well before 1518.<sup>27</sup> By April of that year we find Erasmus regretfully reporting to Wilhelm Nesen "that More himself is entirely absorbed by the court"—or perhaps better rendered, "is entirely the courtier" (*Morus ipse est aulicus*)—being always attendant upon the king to whom he is now secretary.<sup>28</sup> With his marvelous capacity for self-transposition

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<sup>24</sup> CWM, IV, 10–11; on the fictional character of Utopia see the almost classic article by Sylvester, "Si Hythlodaeo credimus," and the theme's further elaboration in R. J. Schoeck, "A Nursery of Correct and Useful Institutions: On Reading More's *Utopia* as Dialogue," *Moreana*, 22 (1969), 19–32.

<sup>25</sup> Baker-Smith, 34; cf. CWM, IV, xxxiii–xl.

<sup>26</sup> Baker-Smith, 34; cf. CWE, III, 239; Allen, II, 200–201.

<sup>27</sup> G. R. Elton, "Thomas More, Councillor (1517–1529)," in *St. Thomas More: Action and Contemplation*, ed. Richard S. Sylvester (New Haven, 1972), 88–92.

<sup>28</sup> Baker-Smith, 34–36n16. The complexity of More's acceptance of public office and the case for his reluctance have been well explored by Germain Marc'hadour,

More amusedly captures his own anxiety, similar to that of so many other less well-composed courtiers, who, in search of the certainty of royal favor, study every feature of the king's demeanor, misattributing their meaning:

[E]veryone . . . finds a ground for imagining that he is in the King's good graces like the London wives who, as they pray before the image of the Virgin Mother of God which stands near the Tower, gaze upon it so fixedly that they imagine it smiles upon them.<sup>29</sup>

Only one with rare, even poetic sensitivity to human frailty would be able to convey with such earthy simplicity the complexity of human self-deception. And yet More's own letter here, which began by his identifying himself with the precariousness of an unaccustomed rider, ends by claiming for himself a feeling of being now better adjusted to the saddle of life at court.<sup>30</sup>

After the initial, decisive tug into the vortex of courtly, governmental business, was it shortly thereafter, possibly by 1520, that More regained his equilibrium with the enforced distancing he willed upon himself regarding protracted and repeated attendance upon the royal person for the latter's relaxation and pleasurable diversion?<sup>31</sup>

The first direct contact between the two humanist public servants is made by More in a letter of August 1518 to Budé, who had earlier been recruited by Erasmus for a prefatory letter to the *Utopia*—a letter that uniquely went to the very heart of the subject. By his own appreciation of the philological depths of Budé's work, More now reciprocates. As both humanists approached each other having previously read each other's published writings, More would have surely felt indebted to Budé for his prefatory letter to Thomas Lipset, appearing in and enormously dignifying the second edition of *Utopia*, published in Paris in November 1517.<sup>32</sup> A profound intellectual, even

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"Fuitne Thomas Morus in Aulam Pertractus?" in *Acta Conventus Neo-Latini Sanctandreami*, ed. I. D. McFarlane (Binghamton, N.Y., 1986), 441–48, where at 444 Budé is interestingly represented as "grumpy" and louder in his own reluctance.

<sup>29</sup> *SL*, 94.

<sup>30</sup> *SL*, 94.

<sup>31</sup> William Roper, "The Life of Sir Thomas More," in *Two Early Tudor Lives*, ed. R. S. Sylvester (New York, 1962), 202; cf. my own "The Problem of Counsel Revisited: More, Castiglione, and the Resignation of Office in the Sixteenth Century," *Moreana*, 40, nos. 153–54 (2003), 108–9.

<sup>32</sup> Rogers, 124, lines 1–2, 126, lines 6–9. On the earlier, indirect connections between More and Budé see Peter R. Allen, "*Utopia* and European Humanism:

spiritual rapport reveals itself at the very outset of their direct literary exchange, hardly requiring their actual physical meeting. More's opening letter is peculiarly valuable to our present inquiry in that it reflects an acute appreciation on More's part for the recently published *De asse*. Here the doyenne of Budé scholars, Marie-Madeleine de La Garanderie, has been quick to point out More's sharp perceptiveness and appreciation of the obscurity of Budé's style as something quite appropriate to the recondite nature of the subject and for a most limited and learned readership.<sup>33</sup> More claims to have given this work on Roman measures a very special attention beyond that reserved for an ancient author. Having promptly adopted the familiar, almost loving, second person singular, More dispels any doubts as to the aspirations and capabilities of mature humanism to touch the past by means of philology and the mind's imagination. For whoever can bring a strenuous and sustained attention comparable to that of its author,

he will find that the light you have thrown upon your subject brings the dead past to life again. Whilst he ponders your words, he will live in imagination through all the past ages, and will be able to gaze upon, to count and almost to take into his hands, the hoarded wealth of all kings, tyrants and nations, which is almost more than any misers have been able to do.<sup>34</sup>

More allows his opening letter to rise to the recognition of a close bonding between the two humanist public servants in having the same friends and the same temperament and goals, and, as a married man, in presenting a laicity, which More himself shares, and that here challenges the learning that had hitherto belonged exclusively to the clergy.<sup>35</sup>

Given More's natural alertness to the new, burgeoning book industry, he could have read the *De asse* in its first edition during the critical period of March to September 1515, while composing Hythloday's Utopia, or the later, expanded definitive edition of mid-October

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The Function of the Prefatory Letters and Verses," *Studies in the Renaissance*, 10 (1963), 91–107, esp. 97–98, 103–5, regarding Lupset's important interventions at Paris in 1517.

<sup>33</sup> *Mor.*, 51n2.

<sup>34</sup> *SL*, 107–9.

<sup>35</sup> Cf. Rogers, 124–25; *Mor.*, 50–51.



1516, after the entirety of *Utopia* had left his hands that September.<sup>36</sup> Even so, More would have not required the inducement to dialogue evinced by Budé's rather limp efforts emergent in his own *De asse*. Nevertheless it could have served to confirm his decision to resort to a further presentation of the issues better afforded by means of the dialogue form. More's extraordinary appreciation both of the style and the substance of the *De asse* at this opening stage of their friendship invites further study and consideration. Indeed, it may be observed, since the powers of Philology were very much prized by both humanists, More's statement, quoted here, stands as a challenge to the erosive, self-reflexive literary currents of a later age.

In the subsequent correspondence between the two preeminent court humanists Budé emerges as most voluble, while More's responses remain comparatively terse. In replying to this initiated opening plus a lost letter from his English counterpart, Budé by means of a massive missive seizes the opportunity to celebrate the demands as well as the rewards of Philology.<sup>37</sup> After the expectable amenities of humanistic exchange, he warms to his subject in defending the apparent obscurity of his writing and his deliberately directing it beyond the vulgar to a most limited audience. Among those few he now counts More, wonderfully rejoicing and joyfully marveling in being completely won over to him, both together born as it were under the same stars. For what they share in common as a veritable third companion is Philology, whose effective exercise, as the two humanists can attest, has but few examples at this time.<sup>38</sup> Of course the results of such long study and huge effort are quite beyond the appreciation of the vulgar and in fact encounter opposition from the more elevated estates, receiving cold welcome among the great and being ignored by kings and princes.<sup>39</sup> Here Budé speaks of his own fascination with the all-consuming demands and attractions of Philology—so great as only to be surpassed by the divine liturgy and the desire

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<sup>36</sup> CWM, IV, xv–xvi; on the Paris 1516 edition see BN, 15, #58. In commenting upon More's later *Treatise upon the Passion* (CWM XIII, 263), where the author speculates on the nature and value of Judas's *triginta argenteos* (XIII, 79, line 11 – 80, line 6), the editor, Garry Haupt, finds certain parallels drawn from Budé's *De asse*.

<sup>37</sup> Rogers, 125–32; *Mor.*, 51–58.

<sup>38</sup> Rogers, 128, lines 80–114; *Mor.*, 53, line 80 – 54, line 114.

<sup>39</sup> Rogers, 129, line 149 – 130, line 153; *Mor.*, 55, lines 149–54.

for eternal felicity, yet great enough for him to defer the allurements of the conjugal bed in pursuing his passion for Dame Philology, his wife's rival, as it were.<sup>40</sup> While the more practically minded among us may entertain doubts as to the actual validity of Budé's rhetorical admissions to his new, most dear colleague—especially when in an earlier paragraph in the same letter Budé had recounted his having seven out of nine children surviving<sup>41</sup>—nevertheless his exaggeration can leave no doubt as to the reality of this mastering passion, the rewards as well as the wasting demands of this apparent key to some degree of textual and hence historical truth. As fitting and most significant counterpart we are reminded of Vasari's representation of the artist Paolo Uccello, who, working long into the night, similarly consumed by the passion for a new cognitive technique and ignoring the exhortations of his wife, found far, far sweeter the delights of perspective.<sup>42</sup> Whatever the rhetorical exaggeration, very real and significantly new intellectual pursuits are here being laid bare. Together *philologia* and *perspectiva* effectively embody the cognitive import and newness of the Renaissance.

The richness of this letter does not limit itself to the scholarly and intellectual dimensions of their emerging common experience but extends itself to include the political sphere. In pursuing the letter's overarching theme of the mutual interest and enterprise of the two humanists, both royal councilors, Budé advances the image of a very special fraternity bonding the two humanists both in peace and in war. This complex image of fraternal, reciprocal counseling on the part of each pertaining to peace as well as war Budé situates within the contemporary effort of a general European peace to be sought in London during early October 1518—a genuine effort, largely on Cardinal Wolsey's initiative, to achieve general peace in Europe.<sup>43</sup>

<sup>40</sup> Rogers, 129, lines 115–43; *Mor.*, 54, lines 115–43.

<sup>41</sup> Rogers, 128, lines 95–99; *Mor.*, 53, lines 95–99. To another English scholar, Cuthbert Tunstal, Budé had a year earlier (CWE, IV, 354, line 100–355, line 136) elaborated quite personally, almost confessionally, the immense demands of this second wife, Philologia, and how through his first wife he procreated children, and through his second, books.

<sup>42</sup> Giorgio Vasari, *Le vite de' più eccellenti pittori, scultori e architettori*, ed. Rosanna Bettarini, III, *Testi* (Florence, 1971), 72: "O che dolce cosa è questa prospettiva!" [the La Giuntina 1568 version]. But since he is reported to have said this *tutta la notte*, the comparative seems warranted.

<sup>43</sup> Garrett Mattingly, *Renaissance Diplomacy* (Boston, 1955), 167–71.

But the importance of Budé's suggestion, howsoever fanciful and costing him nothing, contains a measure of serious political purpose and presents us for a fleeting moment not only with apparently the most genuinely political aspiration ever entertained by Budé in the use of his proximity to his king, but one that he wishes to share in bonding with More and the exhortation to comparable action with his king—internal peacemaking and external crusade. Budé's representation of himself and his English counterpart here as "twin luminaries of this specific task" [peacemaking] (*istius provinciae lumina*)<sup>44</sup> indeed proved fanciful in the harsh context of European political realities, and certainly, as the proposal extends itself to joint military action, the fraternity of combat leading to a joint illustrious death, the passage climbs to ever higher degrees of fancifulness, any residual political reality evaporating in the rhetorical ascent. Nevertheless there remains a nucleus of political substance for both himself and his new-found friend, which Budé in a fleeting moment of opportunity seeks to extend to More.

A most brief, businesslike note follows from More. Then Budé resumes. That of 12 August 1519 suggests the lonely longing of one kindred spirit for another and the immense importance of the letter between learned friends. More's sending Budé some rings rather than a letter, somewhat reminiscent of his having initiated their friendship by sending to the French humanist a brace of hounds, becomes for Budé the source of disappointment and mild chastisement for his English friend's neglect, even laziness.<sup>45</sup>

Following their actual meeting in the subsequent year, More, writing from Calais in what remained of June or in early July, sends two short yet important letters. In the first he addresses the matter of the possible publication by Budé of their correspondence, which More now with suddenly acquired caution finds potentially dangerous. For he asks to be allowed to revise his own letters, and not

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<sup>44</sup> Rogers, 131, lines 203–7; *Mor.*, 56, line 205. "Equidem quod ad me pertinet, libens in eam pacem ominari soleo, quae tum *inter me et vos istius provinciae lumina*, benevolentiam tueri et vicissitudinem officiorum possit, tum in bellum pium et sacrum principes erectura sit." Curiously La Garanderie mistranslates the italicized passage as *entre moi et vous, lumières de votre patrie*, thereby apparently losing the track and direction of the present argument. A more effective translation of the passage would seem to be "between you and me, twin luminaries of peacemaking."

<sup>45</sup> Rogers, 160–62; *Mor.*, 58–60.

simply to improve their Latinity but to tone them down on matters where he had earlier talked more casually and openly regarding peace, war, morality, marriage, the clergy, and peoples. The request suggests the extent of the correspondence from More's end that we are now missing. But of greater significance stands the fact that More with his usual perceptiveness had come to realize that a new age had abruptly dawned, when, with the advent of Luther, the elegant ambiguities of revived classical rhetoric could expect to be unceremoniously displaced by the pounding certainties of religious polemic. Along with natural authorial reserve the letter also suggests the abruptness of the Reformation, with its displacement of Renaissance currents or their serious realignment.<sup>46</sup>

The second of More's letters becomes his last surviving one to Budé. It reflects upon the joy of their actual meeting despite the probability of their never meeting again, drawn apart by the necessity of attending upon the persons and business of their respective monarchs. There is something prophetic in this last surviving letter from More to Budé: "and we (who had each to follow his own prince) were drawn in opposite directions, perhaps never to see each other again; the happier our meeting had been, the greater was the sadness which assailed me at our parting"<sup>47</sup>—a loss which only further correspondence could partially assuage.<sup>47</sup> Political and courtly pressures reciprocally experienced by each threatened to stifle a friendship that transcended the purely rhetorical.

Budé soldiered on at least to 1527. The mutuality of friendship manifested in correspondence would have been impossible without some responses from More, now lost. Writing as though in receipt of one such letter, Budé compliments More for his natural aptitude of presenting himself always the same, thoroughly pleasing and urbane, a point to which he will return in the final letter of September 1527.<sup>48</sup> Breathing the esteem of profound amity, he marvels at More's ability again to be always the same, to resist triumphantly being metamorphosed by the aulic workshop, this Circean den of chameleons, the court—*literae tuae argumento sunt plenoque documento*<sup>49</sup>—a point Budé

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<sup>46</sup> Rogers, 245–46; *SL*, 144–45.

<sup>47</sup> *SL*, 145; Rogers, 246, lines 10–13.

<sup>48</sup> Rogers, 251, lines 3–4; *Mor.*, 62, lines 3–4.

<sup>49</sup> Rogers, 381, line 14 – 382, line 17; *Mor.*, 66, lines 14–17.

would not have made without the evidence of letters from More now lost to us. It is in the penultimate letter, possibly of the same year, however, that Budé, who had been commissioned to organize the royal library at Fontainebleau and appointed, first Maître des requêtes, then Prévôt des marchands, for Paris, all in 1522, could now share with More most deeply the punishment of being enchained in public functions, unable to return to the more pleasing and disinterested tasks of a former time. Indeed More was now descending into the bottomless maelstrom of religious polemic. Those dual pursuits—the business of the emerging state in the age of secretaries and the business of philology, *duo genera, vel has duas vitae partes*—Budé experiences profoundly and credits his great friend as one apparently undefiled by the aulic spirit. And here the hitherto light scattering of the fine lace of Greek is laid on in denser measure.<sup>50</sup> He concludes on the high and revealing note that this friendship between them is already celebrated in their two countries (*apud nostros*), to which he would only wish to add through this slight letter the word, to steady the unsteady or to rekindle the faint—*instaurare labantem aut exuscitare intermortuam*.<sup>51</sup>

There is much that is brittle and false in humanistic exchange of the period, but the limited surviving correspondence between Budé and More is exemplary for the forging of a common bond of a very real, genuine friendship that springs from their extraordinary personalities but would have been quite impossible without the commonalities of their careers and the shared experience of a reciprocally suffered tension and pain created by an increasing enslavement to public duties and the allurements of high office, preventing them from the enjoyment of intellectual pursuits. This dichotomy in one's life, most intensely felt by Budé, could have been experienced only imperfectly by More; for his preeminent public task was becoming the new, transformed intellectual enterprise of polemical religious controversy. And yet there is a larger dimension to this remarkable correspondence, best perceived by La Garanderie in a remote footnote: the mutual straining after a beautiful style possesses an almost sacramental character, warranted and evoked only by the nature of its subject—friendship; thus the care, thus the ornateness, and thus

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<sup>50</sup> Rogers, 379–80; *Mor.*, 65–66.

<sup>51</sup> Rogers, 380, lines 24–25; *Mor.*, 66, lines 24–25.

a mysterious, even hermetic quality that confers on the dealings of friends a sort of religious gravity.<sup>52</sup>

The gravity and density of More's thought and style certainly found their French counterpart in Guillaume Budé. With him style and content are almost one. At the initiation of their long and rich epistolary exchange, Erasmus correctly characterized this intellectual, stylistic density of Budé as being most demanding upon the reader, requiring one already well informed to devote his utmost attention and learning.<sup>53</sup> In his lengthy response of 26 November 1516 Budé agreed, having earlier lamented to the Dutch humanist that the latter unfortunately expended his own considerable talents on "trivialities"<sup>54</sup>—that while Erasmus may write for many, indeed all, Budé deliberately directs his efforts to a few in unlocking the secret places of antiquity.<sup>55</sup> In fact, by his own self-definition, Budé, according to the prejudices of an age less respectful of learning and impatient with all recognition of merit, distinction, and value, would be designated by that narrowing term, the almost archetypal "elitist."<sup>56</sup> Beyond an intended opacity and obscurity, directed to the sweating delight of the strictly attentive, erudite reader, Budé admits to taking pleasure in digressions which figure most prominently in the *De asse*. In fact, three-tenths of the text is taken up with such often formidable treatises in themselves, which here to Erasmus he admits as a sort of personal intellectual waywardness or exuberance directed toward relevant subjects of both past and current moral and cultural significance. He apparently intends these admitted digressions as ornaments offering some reprieve from the inherent demands of a monetary treatise. In this letter and earlier Budé claims to be directing himself toward a higher philosophy, a *sacra philosophia*, even *theologia*, which with the expansion of the second 1516 edition of the *De asse* at its end aspires to the same subject as Erasmus's *Sileni*, thus bearing our present concern.<sup>57</sup> What exactly then is the digression for Budé?

To an earlier generation of scholars, to Louis Delaruelle, Budé's digressions had been read as an inability to organize and a failure

<sup>52</sup> *Mor.*, 64n7.

<sup>53</sup> CWE, IV, 110, lines 250–56.

<sup>54</sup> CWE, III, 279, lines 134–36; cf. 330, line 74 – 332, line 107.

<sup>55</sup> CWE, IV, 141, line 128 ff.; IV, 145, line 276 ff.; IV, 148, line 369 ff.

<sup>56</sup> CWE, IV, 150, lines 431–41.

<sup>57</sup> CWE, III, 330, lines 63–66; IV, 146, lines 301–6.

of intellectual control; to modern critics and scholars they are seen as more intentional, studied, even central. Margolin, following Céard, sees them less as digressions than as commentaries, but commentaries undergoing transformation, an opportunity for the author to put himself more directly into the work: *De asse* resonates contemporary problems and realities expressive of the author's patriotism in advancing French culture over any enslavement to Italians, his love of letters and deepest concerns entering into these matters. It is even hazarded that the *De asse* is less a scientific treatise on moneys, weights, and measures than a personal reflection on Latin culture compared to current French culture.<sup>58</sup> We approach thus the boundaries of what La Garanderie has called "une philosophie de la culture."<sup>59</sup>

In surveying the awesome terrain of the preeminent Budé scholar and the monumental work of her achievement, one finds in La Garanderie's representation of the premier French humanist's intellectual odyssey an ascent in the formulation of a Christian philosophy and experience in contemplation which has its various stages, the first effective expression being that in the *De asse*, leading on to the *De philologia* (1532) and the *De studio* (1532), and culminating with the *De transitu Hellenismi ad Christianismum* (1535), all made possible by forty years of philological endeavor. Intent upon presenting a seamless progress, transcending any great rift created by the Reformation and Luther's challenge, her examination of the *De asse* ignores its apparently preeminent import on moneys and measures—even the digressions receive but a nod—in order to focus upon the largest one of them all, the Deloynes Epilogue (constituting one-eighth of the entirety), and then only in terms of its philosophical and theological import in the grander scheme of things. Admittedly, as to its philosophical content and import she is supported by Budé's own words to Erasmus.<sup>60</sup> If the crumbs of material existence, the

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<sup>58</sup> Jean-Claude Margolin, "De la digression au commentaire: Pour une lecture humaniste du *De asse* de Guillaume Budé," in *Neo-Latin and the Vernacular in Renaissance France*, ed. Graham Caster and Terence Cave (Oxford, 1984), 1–25, at 10; Jean Céard, "Les transformations du genre du commentaire," in *L'automne de la Renaissance, 1580–1636*, ed. Jean Lafond and André Stegmann (Paris, 1981), 101–17, esp. 3–5; cf. Guy Lavoie, "Y-a-t-il un secret dans l'architecture du *De asse*?" *Renaissance and Reformation/Renaissance et Réforme*, 3 (1979), 29–43.

<sup>59</sup> Marie-Madeleine de La Garanderie, *Guillaume Budé: L'étude des lettres* (Paris, 1988), 12.

<sup>60</sup> *Idem*, *Christianisme et lettres profanes: Essai sur l'Humanisme français (1515–1535) et sur la pensée de Guillaume Budé* (Paris, 1995), 259–310; cf. CWE, IV, 145, lines 268–96.

court, the king, and politics are ignored, here in our present enterprise they capture our attention. We are thus contending with apparently the most remote features of an immense work, vast in its riches and extent—that work which established the international authority and renown of its author.

The problem or issue as presented and shaped by Budé does not concern the usual matter of the courtier's gaining access to the prince for his possible education and further influencing the prince. The whole issue of proximity and possible political influence could not have appeared on Budé's political horizon, which was defined and confined by a legacy of family service and royal office holding going back to the late fourteenth century. At the time of his writing the *De asse* Budé was a royal secretary, and only in 1522 would he acquire significant administrative and judicial functions.<sup>61</sup> The librarianship was unique, with Budé the first to hold it; the other two offices had fixed responsibilities, occasionally exercised by Budé, that were administrative and judicial rather than properly political in the sense of the formation of government policy. Not until after 1517, following Budé's failure to lure Erasmus to France as the preeminent intellectual ornament, did the idea of a royally sponsored series of lectureships come into focus as the sole, overriding goal of our humanist. Thus what elsewhere would be a political goal would pose itself for Budé in terms of patronage and royal largesse directed to the advancement of learning, all in the interest of promoting a French cultural preeminence. What more appropriate and despite its difficulties reasonably obtainable by Europe's leading Hellenist, quite fitting for an intellectual and scholar?

With political involvements reduced to bureaucratic routine, whatever proximity to the king or possible influence upon him Budé might possess defined itself as a matter of engaging royal patronage in order to give focus and direction to the ordinarily marvelously distracted monarch. He seems to have been most attendant upon an itinerant court in the period 1520–24, after which time the demands upon his presence diminished.<sup>62</sup> For the period 1515 and

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<sup>61</sup> Mousnier, *Conseil*, 277–92.

<sup>62</sup> Mousnier, *Conseil*, 284. Professor Fantazzi kindly provided me with the draft of his translation of Budé's letter of 22 April 1527 to Erasmus (no. 1812) for a forthcoming volume of the CWE. Note 4, pertaining to the period after the Field of Cloth-of-Gold, reads that Budé "followed the court to Amboise, Blois, Romorantin,



1516 the immediate problem was not so much the humanist-intellectual in government service but rather the courtier and the survival of the humanist and his tightly focused cultural purpose, studying in the alien milieu of the royal court and its sycophants, the *chamaeleontes aulici*.<sup>63</sup>

The *De asse*'s lengthy, winding Epilogue culminates with the report of Louis XII's death and the advent of the new reign, with all the sense of new beginnings. By introducing his closest friend, François Deloynes, into his text, Budé only to a limited degree parts company with his learned discourses by resorting to the possibilities of dialogue in order to convey the opportunities and new considerations afforded by the moment. Impatient for *De asse*'s completion, toward which Budé himself presses, Deloynes begins to contend with his friend not regarding the substance of the work, but rather by means of critical objection to draw Budé away from his natural disposition to pursue the depths of a wisdom both Christian and philosophical; he consciously rejects any sort of accommodation of the mind to the indignity of present issues.<sup>64</sup> In admitting that the royal court is innocent of liberal education with its beneficent influences, the patron in fact of ignorance, Budé represents this court as far removed from any love of education and virtue. Deloynes adds that Gallic intellectual force will not be able to remain upright before the world (*in hac scena*) unless our France gives birth to other Greeks. If studies in France are in a perilous condition, why not transfer their present cultivation and mischievous observance to the cultivation of morals pleasing to this age? Reluctant to break with the pursuits of intellectual contemplation as guided by *philologia*, Budé protests being made the servant of utility.<sup>65</sup> He continues to plead a *philosophia*, a true love of wisdom that would ostensibly include a divine dimension (*uranoscopius*) promotive of an education liberal in nature that makes citizens more civil and humans more humane.<sup>66</sup> This higher

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Dijon, Autun, Troyes, and Rheims. In 1522, in September 1523, and from October to December 1524 he was in attendance at the court in Lyon." It seems that increasingly violent headaches contributed to Budé's later inability to maintain such a schedule.

<sup>63</sup> *De asse*, 1557, 299, where the text reads *istos chamaelontes* and has not retained the earlier gloss of *chamaelontes aulici* appearing in 1515 at fol. CLXIIv and 1516 at fol. CLXXXIIIv.

<sup>64</sup> *De asse*, 1557, 303.

<sup>65</sup> *De asse*, 1557, 304.

<sup>66</sup> *De asse*, 1557, 305.

philosophy does not prostitute itself to the people. Budé contrasts this focus upon divine contemplation, with its tranquility of life, to the turbulence of the court, requiring a submissive obedience. By “the court” he understands a place never free for contemplating the ultimate matters—an assembly of those skilled in artifice, practiced more in flattery than eloquence, such that any submerged in this abyss of license and error afterward is incapable of looking up to heaven, nor of emerging from that assembly. Deloynes replies by depicting Budé as immoderate in nothing other than his humanist studies “from which you have never been able to be called by either a family matter nor by poor health”—subject to being consumed by Philologia. “For how long, I ask, do you retain this mistress in the bedchamber and sometimes even in the marriage bed of a woman dear and related to me?”<sup>67</sup>

To place this charge no matter how metaphorical in the mouth of Deloynes shows a degree of imagination and force sorely lacking in an otherwise all too wooden dialogue.<sup>68</sup> Or is it evidence of part of an actual discussion that Budé had experienced with his close

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<sup>67</sup> “Quamdiu enim quaeso hanc *foeminae mihi affinis & dilectae* pellicem in thalamo & geniali interdum lecto retines?” *De asse*, 1557, 306. In the 1516 edition Budé made the most significant additions both in the text and with the glosses, yet careful comparison of the texts cited in this article reveals a practice where the Basel will occasionally double a verb or an adjectival construction for emphasis without essentially affecting the sense. Hereafter, when this practice occurs, the additional word or words present in the Basel 1557 but absent from the first two editions will be italicized. In the present instance it should be noted, however, that while the 1516 edition at fol. CLXXXVIII has the passage, yet it is lacking the five italicized words; the 1515 edition at fol. CLXVII lacks the passage and related sentences entirely. Although this absence in the early editions is unfortunate for the present argument, nevertheless it can be suggested that we have here the raw substance of an earlier exchange, clear enough to the two participants, but on later consideration made explicit for readers by means of the additional wording. The Venice 1522 edition at fol. 254v and the Paris 1524 edition at fol. CLXXXVIII follow the 1516 edition in including the passage itself but lacking the explicit additional wording. It is not until the Paris 1527 edition at fol. CCIv that these five words are now introduced and that we first encounter the passage in its entirety, which will be followed by Paris 1532 at fol. CXCV, Paris 1541 at fol. CCXVII, and Lyon 1542 at p. 797. In the general effort to survey all editions of the *De asse* preceding the Basel 1557 edition, I am most indebted to Professor Kate Lowe of the University of London for checking the British Library copies of the Venice 1522 and Paris 1527 editions. Beyond these five words, she thus found that the Paris 1527 edition—rather than Paris 1532, as I had previously believed—was largely responsible for the additional words surveyed in this study with but one exception.

<sup>68</sup> On the immense demands of this second wife, Philologia, in the context of his first, see above, note 41.

friend and relative by marriage? For in any comparative consideration of the two types of dialogue inhering to our inquiry, we need to remind ourselves that unlike More's dialogues in *Utopia*, Book I, Budé's or something very similar to it actually took place. Yet such is More's artistry that his dialogue lives, while Budé's, that of the compleat scholar, remains buried.

Taking the bit of moderation between his teeth, as Budé himself expresses it, he asks himself whether he can fashion himself according to the manners of the court. Can he pretend to be a courtier? Indeed it is for him comparable to rubbing the blush from his forehead. He registers inadequacy and self-consciousness if he should speak among these word fashioners (*Logodaedalos*) and bendable people (*flexiloquos*).<sup>69</sup> For in perceiving a special courtly language, he claims his inability to match the elegance of that rhetoric which changes monthly and without knowledge of which none can speak except by inciting laughter.

Although I cannot sufficiently understand these and many other examples of this training, perhaps through the defect of a somewhat recalcitrant nature, and also because Roman eloquence does not dwell in a mouth subject to the influence of others and up for sale, I have no objection that others who are clever and refined by nature distinguish themselves and become wealthy in a dismal existence. But that court will never hold me willingly since even if I desired it greatly, it would not be able to make me forever its own even after long experience. . . . For I do not think it disgraceful to pay external homage to those men who have the good fortune to be brilliant in the presence of the prince if we do not see these same men standing out for their notoriety and unpopularity among the people and the estates. . . . At any rate, as the status and appearance of courtly affairs are today and generally, hardly one person in three seems to have concern for his future and eternal life. To such an extent does the mad love of honors and riches render people senseless and unmindful.<sup>70</sup>

<sup>69</sup> *De asse*, 1557, 307.

<sup>70</sup> "Haec & alia permulta eius institutionis documenta, quum nec tenere satis possum, ingenij fortasse refractarioli vitio, nec in ore sedeant Romanae affecto *mancipatoque* facundiae per me licet *ut* alij natura sciti & elegantes, & illustreis se & beatos faciant in vita tenebrosa; me vero lubentem curia illa nunquam tenebit, quum etiam si maxime cupiam, ne longo quidem usu suum facere & *perpetuum* possit. . . . [N]eque enim aut turpe esse credo eos homines observare, quibus apud principem gratia flagrare *splendereque* contigit, si non eosdem ad populum & ordines infamia atque *invidia* flagrare videamus. . . . siquidem ut est hodie & *plerunque* aulicarum rerum status & facies, vix tertius quisque hominum rationem habere futurae vitae atque

While indicating his complete agreement that these and other similar lessons of philosophy have not escaped him, Deloynes still insists that for a wise man the courtly life need not be fled but rather, citing the cases of Cato and Brutus, Cicero and Seneca, one endowed with knowledge of letters might cross from his remote retreat of studies over to the renown of managing affairs. For today public affairs are of great importance both for one's personal honor and for the reputation of one's family.

Thus, if some day or in the near future a time should come when men of elegant learning are able to act honorably and appropriately among people of the court, why should they not do so willingly as well, as befits civic behavior. . . . If this cannot come about through the opportunity offered by the good grace of philosophy, what reason is there, I ask you, that those learned in literature, like rotted tree trunks, shine only in the shadows?<sup>71</sup>

Budé counters his friend's enticements by identifying the court as possessing the nature and seduction of a beast, and recognized by the more discerning as the Androsphinx, whose circumlocutions they cannot solve even though themselves most knowledgeable regarding courtly affairs. His distrust remains. Yet as with any dialogue it suggests the author's divided thinking that can incorporate at this time something of the position of his apparent opponent.

*1515 to 1520—An Axial Period? A Political Moment?*

Machiavelli's *Prince*, composed in the autumn of 1513, although not published until 1532, represents a new self-awareness regarding the nature and practices of European politics. Its conjunction with a newly trained, humanistically flawn, educated group afforded a more enterprising bureaucracy for the emerging infant state in a quasi-

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aeternae videtur. Usqueadeo vaesanus ille amor honorum & divitiarum, excordes homines immemoresque reddit." *De asse*, 1557, 307; 1515, fol. CLXVII; 1516, fol. CLXXXVIIIv.

<sup>71</sup> "[S]ic si olim aut propediem tempus existat, cum viri doctrina eleganti perpolitū, inter aulicos agere honeste ac commode possint, cur non etiam libentes faciant, ut quod moribus civilibus conveniunt . . . id quod si fieri *per occasionem oblatam* bona philosophiae venia nequit, quid causae est *tandem* quin literarum studiosi, ut caudices marcidi, tantum in tenebris fulgeant?" *De asse*, 1557, 308; 1515, fol. CLXVIII; 1516, fol. CLXXXIX.

estate perhaps best realized by the French *noblesse de robe*. Such a conjunction also posed most acutely now the question as to the role of the scholar, the intellectual, in service to his monarch and his survival in the context of the royal milieu, the court. Together More and Budé chart a range of possibilities in the adjustment of this new, learned personnel to the opportunities and dangers of the new politics. The parallel beginnings of the two lawyer-scholars, of More and Budé, both effectively initiated in 1515–16, proceeded in different political contexts to quite different ends. Budé's apparent success or semblance of same can be partly attributed to the prudence of his narrow, persistent focus upon a limited, attainable goal, properly intellectual and cultural, in a kingdom that managed to ride the storms of the age at least down to the time of the king's death in 1547. The failure of More with all its spectacular and resounding moral resonances can be attributed to his own understanding of the properly political as being of greater range and ambiguity than that of his friend as well as to a time and in a context that was undergoing revolutionary change. The far greater involvement of More in the politics of a world now experiencing upheaval and his strenuous efforts to make it less bad would only lead to his own undoing.

Budé's later success and fulfillment beyond the chronological limits of our present study nevertheless prove instructive for our purposes here and warrant brief consideration (see appendix). We have represented Budé's broadly political functions as real enough but actually judicial and administrative rather than essentially political in the sense of contributing to the formation of policy. Yet in a larger sense Budé's goals become fundamentally most political insofar as the advancement of France's cultural prestige promoted the monarchy both within and abroad. This vision of intellectual culture's effective relationship to power appeared so innovative, so hesitant and remote in its realization, as to threaten none politically in the immediacy of the court and to reduce itself to an ongoing political dance between applicant and royal patron. Admittedly, throughout the period there glowered adjacently as an inhibiting presence the Faculty of Theology and the Parlement of Paris, the massive theological-juridical complex of entrenched conservatism.<sup>72</sup> Yet for

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<sup>72</sup> On the often all too neglected presence of the immense machinery of conservatism at Paris in the University's Faculty of Theology and the Parlement see

the most part the project of royal lectureships appeared in keeping with a monarch whom Budé had assessed in a letter of 1517 to Erasmus as although not lettered, nevertheless one endowed with a natural eloquence of spirit that welcomed the role of being a founder of a magnificent institution.<sup>73</sup> Addressing fifteen years later the two younger sons of Francis I, Budé would observe that his own repeated petitions never left the king disgruntled.<sup>74</sup> Despite his eloquent complaints regarding two lives and commitments, Budé, given his single-minded and reasonable aspiration, as chief ornament of French humanism, could adjust himself comparatively easily to a reign and ruler shaped as much by patronage as by war.<sup>75</sup>

The parallels and commonalities of the lives of More and Budé would persist even after death. For as with More, so with Budé, although unsuccessfully, the effort promptly emerged to represent him as a sort of lay saint. Louis Le Roy, in the biography of his mentor, which first appeared shortly after Budé's death in August 1540, presents him as such, a moral victor sacrificed on the altar of Learning. Emphasizing his character rather than his publications, Le Roy represents him as the conscience rather than the councilor of the king and as one who realized the Ciceronian ideal of *otium cum dignitate*. His argument culminates: "Et quisquam dubitavit illum non sancte modo graviterque, sed beate etiam fortunateque vixisse?" Republished in 1542, the *Vita* would become the official biography of Budé and achieve due exaltation at the hands of Curio, who placed it as the propylaeum to his edition of Budé's *Opera omnia*.<sup>76</sup> Yet Budé's apotheosis would inevitably fall short of canonization. For regarding claims to sainthood, given the temper of the age,

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the important work of James K. Farge, *Le parti conservateur au XVI<sup>e</sup> siècle: Université et Parlement de Paris à l'époque de la Renaissance et de la Réforme* (Paris, 1992), 29–46 and *passim*.

<sup>73</sup> La Garanderie, *Christianisme*, 221, translates the critical passage as Francis being "doué d'une éloquence naturelle." Cf. Allen, IV, 446, line 92, *idiomate facundus*, which perhaps best captures the unique and most original articulateness of this charmed monarch.

<sup>74</sup> *Phil.*, 14–15.

<sup>75</sup> Hence Francis I's most recent and authoritative biographer, R. J. Knecht, entitled his work *Renaissance Warrior and Patron: The Reign of Francis I* (Cambridge, 1994).

<sup>76</sup> On Louis Le Roy's biography of Budé see the fine article of Michel Magnien, "Portrait de Budé en 'intellectuel': La *G. Budaei viri clarissimi Vita* de Louis Le Roy (1540)," *Renaissance and Reformation/Renaissance et Réforme*, 24 (2000), 29–46, esp. 36–37 and n. 47.

undoubtedly there were distinct advantages in having one's head cut off. Here the two most distinguished humanists definitively parted company.

Except for his *De asse*, whose monetary scholarship would persist down to the nineteenth century,<sup>77</sup> Budé, always in the shadows, would survive not as a person in history but through his true political work, his achievement—as having inspired by persistent cliental application, not founded, the future Collège de France in its present reduced form of a number of royal lectureships.<sup>78</sup> Ironically, for Thomas More the exact reverse occurred: with his political work shattered before his own death, he would fare not only better but most magnificently in history as humanist and martyr.

For More the times proved quite different from those of his friend, times especially shaped by a willful monarch. More's political goals were anything but nicely focused upon a limited, attainable end. Given the man and the context, More had to ride the lion of a veritable revolution that would efface many of the old landmarks. The currents of the Reformation as channeled by the ferocious needs of his king would sweep all that resisted in its course. As secretary, official polemicist and finally Lord Chancellor he would be compelled to struggle to make a fearfully bad situation ever so slightly less destructive. Contending with the impossible, he would fail.

Yet as early as June 1520, More, given his customary prescience, managed to surmise the basic contours of the political condition driving apart the only recently secured friendship with his French counterpart: each, condemned to following his respective king and court, would inevitably move away from the other in different directions toward different ends unknown—Budé to further intellectual achievements and the realization of some royal support for his readerships, More to the ever greater perils of the times' political reefs—to England's highest civil office of Lord Chancellor and to the scaffold.

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<sup>77</sup> On the *fortuna* and authority of the *De asse* see Richard Cooper, "Collectors of Coins and Numismatic Scholarship in Early Renaissance France," in *Medals and Coins from Budé to Mommsen*, ed. M. H. Crawford, C. R. Ligota, and J. B. Trapp (London, 1990), 5–23, esp. 12–14; it includes at 21–22 a valuable bibliography for Budé. See also, in the same work, Daniele Foraboschi, "Monetary Theory and the Antiquarian: Eighteenth-Century Numismatic Research," 115–23, esp. 117.

<sup>78</sup> Upon this point the great Marcel Bataillon, "Budé 'fondateur' du Collège de France?," *Moreana*, 19–20 (1968), 29–32, will insist.

*Appendix*

Budé's struggle for royal patronage culminated in the years 1529 to 1532. In the preface to the widely published and acclaimed *Commentarii linguae graecae* of 1529, Budé with remarkable persistence pressed his case before the attention of his would-be royal patron: "You have told us that you will ornament your capital with this establishment, which ought to be for all France a sort of museum. . . . But, at this moment, it is said that you have not kept your promises and, as I stand as surety of the matter, one holds me responsible for this delay. I am laughed at and treated as a perjurer."<sup>79</sup> While one may well marvel at the audacity of Budé in so accosting his royal patron, he remained safe in having the importunate reminder swaddled in elegant Greek. And yet a month later the dilatory monarch took the first decisive step in the establishing of the future Collège de France by appointing Jacques Toussaint as reader in Greek on 29 November 1529.<sup>80</sup> The year 1530 saw a degree of fulfillment: Pierre Danès and Jacques Toussaint for Greek; François Vatable and Agathias Guidacier, and shortly thereafter a third reader, Paul Paradis, for Hebrew; and a reader in mathematics, Oronce Fine. Yet the debonair monarch never made any specific provision for their maintenance.<sup>81</sup> The struggle continued.

With the *De philologia* (1532) Budé returns to dialogue but now more effectively than before. He endows his king with a Latinity which in life the monarch lacked; he moves, he turns, he laughs with a characteristic bonhomie. For the work has little to do with philology as a critical, textual technique but much with the recognition of the new literati and to the immortalizing capacity of good letters for the king and Crown. Budé returns to recapture the theme explored at the beginnings of his royal patronage in 1517–19, the *Institution du prince*—a royal patronage of letters and culture in general that glorifies, empowers, and immortalizes the prince-patron, now to be further developed in the *De philologia*.<sup>82</sup> He presses most

<sup>79</sup> BN, 26, #97.

<sup>80</sup> BN, 29, #108.

<sup>81</sup> Farge, *Le parti conservateur*, 36–37.

<sup>82</sup> Stephen Murphy, *The Gift of Immortality: Myths of Power and Humanist Poetics* (Madison, 1997), 224–27, 235.



effectively his case for the *causam Philologiae* and the *ordo Philologorum*.<sup>83</sup> The work includes some important statements on Budé's view of royal absolutism which serve to modify any extreme interpretations:<sup>84</sup> *imperium absolutum* is presented as something rarely invoked or exercised by the best princes to the ignoring of both a higher law or lower laws;<sup>85</sup> and the prince's good judgment resides essentially in his council wherein ought to be compacted the interests of all estates (*ex omni ordine*) and wherein may be admitted a representative from the newly lettered (*ex Minervae comitatu*) who now pervade the law courts and offices of the kingdom, allowing Budé to urge their further advancement in the governance of France (*in Franciae prytaneo*).<sup>86</sup> The *De philologia* in effect dramatizes the continuing negotiations and pressures applied by Budé in the decade following the few years sketched here. In the process, apart from himself and any direct personal gain, he upholds an ideal of the new state's support, use, and benefit from its enhanced intellectual resources, which pertains to our present inquiry. Certainly, as Marc Fumaroli has observed, the meager, scattered results during the sixteenth century fell far short of contemporary encomiasts' representation of Francis I as supporting "la grande vision budéenne d'un salut du royaume par les Lettres."<sup>87</sup>

In another respect the *De philologia* as a late work warrants our consideration in the present context by its advancing an understanding of Budé's second mistress, Philologia. Its second book includes a long section on hunting, which Louis Le Roy in 1570 would translate into French at the command of Charles IX. In the work itself hunting serves both as an extended metaphor for the lifelong philological pursuits of Budé and as a means of capturing the attention of the king.<sup>88</sup> It echoes those vigilant hounds appearing in the manuscript version of the *Institution* presented to the king in 1519 and in the posthumous Arrivour edition of 1547 and Budé's love of the floppy-eared dogs,<sup>89</sup> all reminiscent of the passionate hunting of his

<sup>83</sup> *Phil.*, 12–13, 138–39.

<sup>84</sup> Cf. Claude Bontems, *Le prince dans la France des XVI<sup>e</sup> et XVII<sup>e</sup> siècles* (Paris, 1965), 38–39.

<sup>85</sup> *Phil.*, 166.

<sup>86</sup> *Phil.*, 306–7.

<sup>87</sup> *Phil.*, Préface, 16.

<sup>88</sup> *Phil.*, 176–245.

<sup>89</sup> *Phil.*, 260.

youth. This passion for hunting, metamorphosed into philological pursuits, More apparently surmised correctly when, two years before even meeting his great friend, he sent Budé a brace of hounds (*parcanum Britannicorum*).<sup>90</sup> Thus it would seem that in our beginning is our end.

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<sup>90</sup> Rogers, 125, line 1.

PART TWO

HUMANISM, RELIGION, AND MORAL PHILOSOPHY



## CHAPTER SEVEN

### ALBERTI IN BOCCACCIO'S GARDEN: AFTER-DINNER THOUGHTS ON MORAL PHILOSOPHY

Timothy Kircher

The relation between Leon Battista Alberti and Giovanni Boccaccio seems, at first glance, a slight one. Scholars have more often mentioned how Alberti may have appreciated the work of Petrarch, Boccaccio's friend and *miglior fabbro*.<sup>1</sup> Otherwise those studying Alberti's literary ancestors have attended to Alberti's use of Greek and Latin classics.<sup>2</sup> And this attention makes sense, for at least two reasons. First, Alberti refers explicitly to classical authors and hardly ever to Trecento authors; second—and this reason may explain the first—humanists of his time, as Ronald Witt has convincingly demonstrated, pursued the purer *vetustas* of Cicero.<sup>3</sup> They thus accorded faint praise to Trecento predecessors, a praise that turned especially tinny and muted for their vernacular writings.

We may imagine that Alberti valued Boccaccio's Tuscan efforts more highly than did the older civic humanists. One need only think of Alberti's early amorous writings, the *Sofrona*, the *Ecatonfilea*, and the *Deifira*, in which Cecil Grayson sees an immediate *Decameronian*

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<sup>1</sup> See David Marsh, "Petrarch and Alberti," in *Renaissance Studies in Honor of Craig Hugh Smyth*, ed. Andrew Morrogh et al. (2 vols.; Florence, 1985), I, 363–75; Francesco Tateo, "Le forme dell'argomentazione nella tarda trattatistica albertiana," in *Leon Battista Alberti: Actes du congrès international de Paris 1995*, ed. Francesco Furlan et al. (2 vols.; Paris, 2000), I, 391–403.

<sup>2</sup> See David Marsh, *Lucian and the Latins: Humor and Humanism in the Early Renaissance* (Ann Arbor, 1998); and "Alberti and Apuleius: Comic Violence and Vehemence in the *Intercenales* and *Momus*," in *Leon Battista Alberti: Actes du congrès international*, I, 405–26; "Alberti's *Momus*: Sources and Contexts," in *Acta conventus neo-latini Hafniensis* (Binghamton, 1994), 619–32. Also Lucia Bertolini, *Grecus sapor: Tramiti di presenze greche in Leon Battista Alberti* (Rome, 1998); Luca Boschetto, "Ricerche sul *Theogenius* e sul *Momus* di Leon Battista Alberti," *Rinascimento*, 2nd ser., 33 (1993), 3–52; and Rinaldo Rinaldi, "*Melancholia Christiana*": *Studi sulle fonti di Leon Battista Alberti* (Florence, 2002).

<sup>3</sup> Ronald G. Witt, "*In the Footsteps of the Ancients*": *The Origins of Humanism from Lovato to Bruni* (Leiden, 2000), chaps. 9 and 10.

influence; and of his later vernacular dialogues, from the *Della famiglia* to the *De iciarchia*, and the *Certame coronario* of 1441.<sup>4</sup> While Alberti's own mature prose did not derive directly from that of Boccaccio, it is clear that Alberti encouraged the use of Tuscan as a means of cultural edification, and in this project he was joined by Matteo Palmieri, who modeled his *Vita civile* on the cornice of the *Decameron*.<sup>5</sup>

But did his estimation for Boccaccio's most inventive work, the *Decameron*, extend beyond its linguistic accomplishment? What of the theme of *eros* and sexual relations, certainly the central concern of the *Decameron*-narrator?<sup>6</sup> As noted, Alberti's early vernacular writings suggest his delight in Boccaccian sexual parody. The *Ecatonfilea* describes a woman of a hundred lovers; in the *Sofrona* the title character, along with other women, rebukes "Battista" for his attack on the female sex.<sup>7</sup> Women, they claim, are much stronger than Battista would

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<sup>4</sup> See Sarah Stever Gravelle, "The Latin-Vernacular Question and Humanist Theory of Language and Culture," *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 49 (1988), 367–86, esp. 380–81; Cecil Grayson, "Alberti as a Writer," in *Essays in Honour of John Humphreys Whitfield*, ed. H. C. Davis et al. (London, 1975), 84–98, esp. 91, where Grayson distinguishes "between prose on amorous themes and prose of moral content. In order to compose during his youth in Bologna, *Deifira* and *Ecatonfilea*, he must have studied the works of the master of the genre Boccaccio. . . ." I would claim that even a few of these early works, such as the *Deifira*, convey a moral tone. In this respect see Stefano Cracòlici, "I percorsi divergenti del dialogo d'amore: la *Deifira* di L. B. Alberti e i suoi 'doppi,'" *Albertiana*, 2 (1999), 137–67. On the *certame*, see Guglielmo Gorni, "Storia del certame coronario," *Rinascimento*, 2nd ser., 12 (1972), 135–81.

<sup>5</sup> On humanists and the vernacular, see also the essay above by James Hankins.

<sup>6</sup> See *Decameron* IV. intro. 30–32: "Dicono adunque alquanti de' miei riprensori che io fo male, o giovani donne, troppo ingegnandomi di piacervi, e che voi troppo piacete a me. Le quali cose io apertissimamente confesso, cioè che voi me piacete e che io m'ingegno di piacere a voi. . . . Riprenderannomi, morderannomi, lacererannomi costoro se io, il corpo del quale il produsse tutto atto a amarvi e io dalla mia puerizia l'anima vi disposi sentendo la virtù dell'luce degli occhi vostri, la soavità delle parole melliflue e la fiamma accesa da' pietosi sospiri, se voi me piacete o se io di piacervi m'ingegno. . . ." All references to the *Decameron* are to the edition by Vittore Branca, 3rd ed. (Turin, 1992).

<sup>7</sup> *Ecatonfilea*, in Alberti, *Opere volgare*, ed. C. Grayson (3 vols.; Bari, 1960–73), III, 195–219 [henceforth abbreviated as *OV*]; *Sofrona*, in *OV*, III, 265–71. The title character says, "E tu, Battista, che stoltizia fu la tua scrivere a Paulo iuriconsulto lettere, sì vituperando noi altre femmine? Indegno della grazia quale sempre avesti presso di tutte le fanciulle!" (*OV*, III, 267, line 24–268, line 3). She refers to Alberti's letter "De amore" to his friend Paolo Codagnello (*OV*, III, 247–64). See also his translation of Walter Map's "Dissuasio Valerii ad Ruffinum philosophum ne uxorem ducat," discussed by Grayson: "Leon Battista Alberti traduttore di Walter Map," *Lettere italiane*, 7 (1955), 3–13.

believe, especially in their ability to recover from love's disappointments.<sup>8</sup> Since this encounter occurs in a church, it echoes how the *brigata* of the *Decameron* coalesced in Santa Maria Novella.<sup>9</sup>

Yet Alberti's major vernacular dialogues show a concern for propriety and self-restraint. The characters of Teogenio and Genipatrio in the *Theogenius*, of Agnolo Pandolfini in the *Profugiorum*, and of Battista in the late *De iciarchia* all pronounce, in different contexts, the rational pursuit of virtue, free from emotional distress.<sup>10</sup> "Oh the most pernicious plague for mortals is excessive love," proclaims Pandolfini; "Nothing dissipates and consumes the means of life as much as lascivious pleasures," says the elder Battista."<sup>11</sup> These statements validate, in milder tones, the theme of Alberti's youthful letter "De amore" to his friend Paolo Codagnello and the counsel of Filarco in the *Deifira*, who admonishes his love-sick friend to "be manly and take the best way. Only once will you regret cutting that member which continuously torments you too much."<sup>12</sup>

We can see therefore a split from the erotic in much of Alberti's writings. Book II of the *Della famiglia* has the young Battista asserting, for the sake of debate, that erotic love is more powerful than

<sup>8</sup> *Sofrona*, in *OV*, III, 269, lines 23–25: "Ma in noi fiorece questa prudenza, che sappiamo a ogni nostra volontà ritrarci, e dimenticar l'impresa: voi sempre perseverate miseri."

<sup>9</sup> Alberti, similar to Boccaccio, wrote the tale to comfort a friend. He tells him that he understands that he suffers and that "prudenti antiqui scrittori" admonish him to "ossistere e propulsare da noi ogni tristezza e mala cura d'animo . . ." (267, lines 13–16). One may also mention the poetic narrative "Agilitta" about a woman's distress in love, composed in *terze rime* (*OV*, II, 16–21).

<sup>10</sup> *Theogenius* in *OV*, II, 61, lines 4–9: "Onde, non iniuria, possiamo assentire a que' dottissimi quali affermano in la vita de' mortali cose alcune di sua natura essere tali che sempre e a qualunque sia sono buone e utilissime e lodatissime. In qual numero si scrive la virtù, la mente ornata di buon costumi, ben retto iudizio, e ben regolato ingegno . . ."; and *OV*, II, 67, lines 27–28: "Dotto adunque e per lungo uso seco ben saggio, a me stesso insegnai contenere mia volontà e frenare e' miei appetiti"; *Profugiorum* in *OV*, II, 114, lines 6–8: "Vuolsi adattare l'animo a virtù. Conduceravvelo la ragione; e sempre sarà l'anmo osservatore della ragione purché la sinistra volontà nollo svii. . ."; and *De iciarchia* in *OV*, II, 196, lines 33–34: "Quella parte in noi dell'animo ove sede la ragione, regge e governa la parte in quale si commove l'appetito. . ."

<sup>11</sup> *Profugiorum*, in *OV*, II, 142, lines 30–31: "Oh perniziosissima peste a' mortali el troppo amore. . ."; *De iciarchia*, in *OV*, II, 198, lines 7–8: "Nulla dissipa e consuma e' sussidi della vita quanto le voluttuose lascivie. . ."

<sup>12</sup> *Deifira* in *OV*, III, 241, lines 24–25: ". . . prendi virile animo di te e buon partito. Una sola volta ti dolerà tagliare quel membro quale ad continuo troppo ti tormenta."

friendship.<sup>13</sup> His uncle Lionardo counters and trumps this argument by proclaiming that virtue and honor move the soul more than sensual passion; thus virtuous friendship is stronger than sex.<sup>14</sup> In the third book, Giannozzo engages Lionardo in an extended *de re uxoria*, defining in detail the wife's domestic duty both to be and to seem virtuous, chaste, and authoritative.<sup>15</sup> The husband should master his wife: "All wives are thus obedient if husbands know how to be husbands," says Giannozzo from his own experience.<sup>16</sup> This sentiment accords with the role of reason reining in emotion, a commonplace of humanist moral philosophy.<sup>17</sup> It also addresses a central concern of Alberti and his contemporaries, that of domestic authority, the power of fathers and husbands.

Alberti's harsh treatment of sexual passion appears scarcely in harmony with the views of the *Decameron's* narrator, who lauds women as his earthly muses. Why then should we conceive of an impression or influence of the *Decameron* upon Alberti's humanism? Alberti's dialogues however leave open the moment for ironic reversals, especially when these dialogues contrast differing opinions without any

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<sup>13</sup> *I libri della famiglia*, in *OV*, I, 87–88. Battista sounds a Boccaccian tone here about love as "natural appetite"; cf. *Dec.* IV. intro., in particular the story of Filippo Balducci and his son.

<sup>14</sup> *OV*, I, 93–99, esp. 95, lines 3–11, in which the rational self-control is cited as the key to human dignity: "E quale uomo sarebbe mai da preponere, anzi da segregarlo dagli altri animali bruti e vili, se in lui non fusse questa prestanta d'animo, questo lume d'ingegno, col quale e'senta e discerna che cosa sia onestà, onde con ragione poi seguiti le cose lodate, fugga ogni biasimo, e simile, quanto adrizza la ragione, ami la virtù, aodii il vizio, e sé stesso inciti con buone opere ad acquisitare fama e grazia, e così in ogni lascivo apeto sé medesimo raffreni e contenga con ragione, senza la quale niuna sarà da chiamare non stolto?"

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, 216–43.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, 228, lines 10–11: "E così tutte le moglie sono a' mariti obediante quanto questi sanno essere mariti." Translation by Renée Neu Watkins, *The Family in Renaissance Florence* (Long Grove, Ill., 1969), 216.

<sup>17</sup> The debate over Alberti's moral-philosophical thought is on-going. See Giovanni Ponte, "L'interprétation de la vie dans les *Intercenales* de L. B. Alberti," in *Leon Battista Alberti: Actes du Congrès International*, I, 465–76. For the interpreters who see a more Stoical inclination, see Ponte, *Leon Battista Alberti umanista e scrittore* (Genoa, 1991); Cecil Grayson, "The Humanism of Alberti," in *Studi su Leon Battista Alberti*, ed. Paolo Claut (Florence, 1998), 129–48; and Paul-Henri Michel, *Un idéal humain au x<sup>e</sup> siècle: la pensée de Léon-Baptiste Alberti* (Paris, 1930). Contrasting views are offered by Eugenio Garin, "Il pensiero di Leon Battista Alberti: Caratteri e contrasti," *Rinascimento*, 2nd. ser., 12 (1972), 3–20; and Francesco Mirri, "Ironia e Pessimismo nel Pensiero di Leon Battista Alberti," *Forum Italicum*, 7 (1973), 47–64. See also the remarks on the *Theogenius's* moral thinking by Boschetto, "Ricerche sul *Theogenius* e sul *Momus*."



decisive concluding point of view.<sup>18</sup> Lionardo in the *Della famiglia* is unmarried, yet advises in Book I the elder Adovardo on the best way to raise children, a point to which we shall return. In Book II Lionardo also counsels the young Battista on the dangers of sex and the way to choose a wife; he then discusses in Book III with the worldly Giannozzo the proper character of one's spouse.<sup>19</sup>

Boccaccio's impression upon Alberti may be sensed therefore not so much in terms of thematic content as in the less visible modalities of feeling, tone, and voice. The impression is more easily heard than seen. We may perceive this influence in Alberti's *Intercenales* (*Dinner Pieces*). For even as the *Intercenales* continue to cast aspersions upon the erotic and the feminine, they exhibit the playfulness of the *Decameron* tales, and, more instrumentally, their character of irony. By irony we mean an inner quality in contradiction to the outer aspect, an ability to reverse one's initial, literal understanding. Irony bursts the bubble of knowledge one uses to keep oneself upright, showing it to be full of gas, and nothing solid. In both the *Decameron* and the *Intercenales*, this irony deflates the knowledge possessed not only by the protagonist of a story, but also by the narrator; it leaves the reader to wonder, and analyze, just what the author's meaning might be.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> See David Marsh, *The Quattrocento Dialogue: Classical Tradition and Humanist Innovation* (Cambridge, Mass., 1980), 78–99, esp. 80: "Although the clashes of argument found in Bruni, Poggio, and Valla are foreign to the subdued discussion of Alberti's *vulgare* dialogues, in which a more Ciceronian tone of *humanitas* prevails, his dialogues reveal an underlying tone of doubt and perplexity which is more disturbing than the contradictions apparently resolved in the dialogues of the Latin humanists." See also Giovanni Ponte, "Etica ed economia in Leon Battista Alberti," in *Renaissance Studies in Honor of Hans Baron*, ed. Anthony Molho and John A. Tedeschi (Florence, 1971), 283–309; Tateo, "Le forme dell'argomentazione."

<sup>19</sup> For thoughts on the potential ironies in the *Della famiglia*, especially as concerns paternal authority, see the article by John M. Najemy, "Giannozzo and His Elders: Alberti's Critique of Renaissance Patriarchy," in *Society and Individual in Renaissance Florence*, ed. William J. Connell (Berkeley, 2002), 51–78, which also discusses the *Uxoria* from the *Intercenales*, a work we shall examine below.

<sup>20</sup> Erich Auerbach, commenting on *Decameron* IV.2, shows an appreciation of Boccaccio's irony in his *Mimesis: The Representation of Reality in Western Literature*, tr. Willard Trask (Princeton, 1957), 193–94. Dilwyn Knox's *Ironia: Medieval and Renaissance Views on Irony* (Leiden, 1989), chaps. 6–8, provides valuable information on this concept during the Renaissance, but he limits his analysis to explicit references to Socratic irony, rather than examining ironic practice. Knox does mention, without elaboration, Boccaccio's use of *antiphrasis* as a form of irony (160), and in his discussion of "Ironia as Mockery" he cites Alberti's *Momus* as an example of a didactic joke (80n). I have discussed Boccaccio's use of irony in my *The Poet's Wisdom:*

Alberti's appreciation of Boccaccio's irony is all the more striking when we consider how other contemporary humanists responded to his legacy. In Leonardo Bruni's *Dialogi ad Petrum Istrum*, Niccolò Niccoli initially disputes with Coluccio Salutati over the merit of Dante, Petrarch and Boccaccio. In the first dialogue, Niccoli treats Boccaccio with especial disdain, saying that his poor ability "is manifest in his every work"; the three writers together

thought they would be esteemed by everyone as much as they approved themselves. . . . Alas, wretches, what darkness blinds you! By Hercules, I far prefer one letter of Cicero's and one poem of Vergil's to the whole lot of your works.<sup>21</sup>

Niccoli modifies his position afterwards in a second discussion, yet, as Ronald Witt has observed, his countering praise of the Three Crowns strikes one as faint.<sup>22</sup> Given the dialogue form, even more uncertain is Bruni's position toward these writers. Salutati tweaks

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*The Humanists, the Church, and the Formation of Philosophy in the Early Renaissance* (Leiden, 2006), chaps. 3 and 6. Mirri relates Alberti's irony to a "senso che il mondo non è mai monovalente e solubile in una concezione sistematica e aprioristica" (58). A fundamental formulation of Socratic ironic method is expressed by Søren Kierkegaard's *The Concept of Irony with Continual Reference to Socrates*, ed. and tr. Howard V. and Edna H. Hong (Princeton, 1989), 26–41, e.g., at 40: "Like Samson, Socrates grasps the pillars that support knowledge and tumbles everything down into the nothingness of ignorance."

<sup>21</sup> I cite the English translation by Alan Nagel and David Thompson of the *Dialogi* in *The Humanism of Leonardo Bruni*, ed. Gordon Griffiths, James Hankins, and David Thompson (Binghamton, 1987), 74–75. The Latin is found in Eugenio Garin, ed., *Prosatori latini del Quattrocento* (Milan, 1952), 72–74: "Possum haec eadem de Iohanne Boccacio dicere, qui quantum possit in omni opere suo manifestissimus est. . . . Illud tamen commune eorum vitium est, quod singulari arrogantia fuere, nec putaverunt fore quemquam, qui de suis rebus iudicare posset. . . . Heu, miseros, quanto caligo obcaecat! Ego mehercule unam Ciceronis epistolam atque unum Virgillii carmen omnibus vestris opusculis longissime antepono."

<sup>22</sup> Witt, *Footsteps*, 432–40, esp. 437–38: "Just as we doubt Niccoli's sincerity, so we question Bruni's. . . . [T]he *Dialogi* probably aimed at offering a realistic, generally negative assessment of the literary quality of the Three Crowns without openly offending popular Florentine sensibilities. . . ." Witt largely agrees with the conclusions of David Quint, who sees Niccoli deepening his criticism of the *tre corolle* in the second dialogue: "Humanism and Modernity: A Reconsideration of Bruni's *Dialogues*," *Renaissance Quarterly*, 38 (1985), 423–45, esp. 441–42. See also Riccardo Fubini's assessment that Bruni "distanc[ed] himself from the illustrious tradition of Florentine and fourteenth-century culture in general, as personified by Boccaccio." *Humanism and Secularization: from Petrarch to Valla*, tr. Martha King (Durham, N.C., 2003), 46.

Bruni himself for siding with Niccoli.<sup>23</sup> In any event the main standard for praise is Latin: Niccoli eventually singles out Boccaccio's Latin works for the highest praise.<sup>24</sup>

The ambivalence of Quattrocento civic humanists toward their Trecento predecessors is apparent in their biographical writings. When Bruni writes his vernacular *vite* of Dante and Petrarch in 1436, he fixes his attention on Dante's political career and Petrarch's Latin accomplishments; he explicitly criticizes Boccaccio for focusing, in his *Trattatello in laude di Dante*, on Dante's love affairs, as if he belonged among the characters of the *Decameron*: "The delightful little things are remembered, and concerning the serious ones there is only silence."<sup>25</sup> Giannozzo Manetti would complete Latin biographies of all three writers in 1440. In the Preface he refers to their Latin writings as "inferior" to those both of the ancients and of Manetti's contemporaries, a quality which has led the educated to disregard them.<sup>26</sup> Manetti however praises Boccaccio's vernacular prose: "the charm and eloquence of the language gracing all these works are so great that they fascinate even readers ignorant of Latin. . . ."<sup>27</sup> He states

<sup>23</sup> *Dialogi*, in *Prosatori latini*, ed. Garin, 62: "Nam ego de Leonardo non dubito: ita enim video illum in omni sententia cum Nicolao convenire, ut iam arbitrer potius cum illo errare velle quam mecum recta sequi."

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, 94: ". . . ad Bocatium veniamus, cuius ego doctrinam, eloquentiam, leporem, maximeque ingenii praestantitiam in omni re omnique opere admiror: qui deorum genealogias, qui montes atque flumina, qui varios virorum casus, qui mulieres claras, qui bucolica carmina, qui amores, qui nymphas, qui cetera infinita, facundissimo atque lepidissimo ore cecinerit, tradiderit, scripserit. Quis igitur hunc non amet?"

<sup>25</sup> See the *Vite* in Angelo Solerti, ed., *Le vite di Dante, Petrarca e Boccaccio scritte fino al secolo decimosesto* (Milan, [1904]), 97–107, 288–93; English translations by Nagel and Thompson in *Humanism of Bruni*, 85–100. The passage is from *Humanism of Bruni*, 85; see Solerti, *Le vite*, 98: "Perocché tutto d'amore e di sospiri e di cocenti lagrime è pieno; come se l'uomo nascesse in questo mondo solamente per ritrovarsi in quelle dieci giornate amorose, le quali da donne innamorate e da giovani leggiadri raccontate furono nelle Cento Novelle. E tanto s'infiamma in questi parti d'amore, che gravi e sostanziali parti della vita di Dante lascia addietro e trapassa con silenzio, ricordando le cose leggiere e tacendo le gravi."

<sup>26</sup> *Trium illustrium poetarum Florentinorum vita*, in Giannozzo Manetti, *Biographical Writings*, ed. and tr. Stefano U. Baldassarri and Rolf Bagemihl (Cambridge, Mass., 2003), 4 (Pref. 3): "quoniam illi cum carmine tum soluta oratione in hoc materno scribendi genere ceteris omnibus praestiterunt, cum in latina lingua multis non modo veteribus sed etiam novis nostri temporis scriptoribus inferiores appareant."

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, 96–97 (Vita 9): "lepore tantaque verborum elegantia condita . . . ut latinarum litterarum expertes homines . . . capiantur."

in conclusion that Boccaccio excelled only in his knowledge of Greek and his use of the vernacular.<sup>28</sup> Yet like Bruni's Niccoli he also praises the *Genealogia* as Boccaccio's greatest work, and cites Salutati's poem which mentions only his Latin accomplishments.<sup>29</sup>

These ambivalent positions of Bruni and Manetti toward the Trecento vernacular surface also in their adaptations of the *Decameron*. In 1436 Bruni translated into Latin *Decameron* IV.1, the story of the unfortunate Ghismunda and her father Tancredi.<sup>30</sup> Tancredi punishes Ghismunda for her secretive affair with their servant Guiscardo by first executing her lover and then sending her his heart, whereupon she commits suicide. In Bruni's Latin version, Tancredi rebukes Ghismunda for "prostituting your modesty for the sake of a strange man" [*de pudicitia tua alieno viro prostituenda*], a moral note missing from Boccaccio's work.<sup>31</sup> Bruni also composed his own vernacular novella, based upon the classical story of Seleucus and his son Antiochus, to contrast with his translation of *Decameron* IV.<sup>32</sup> The narrator of Bruni's tale tells his *brigata* that this story demonstrates the far greater paternal leniency [*umanità*] of the ancients, when compared to Tancredi's modern severity. Not only in letters, but also in ethics do the ancients excel.<sup>33</sup> Bruni may have developed this contrast between the pedagogical approaches of mildness and harshness from the classical sources of Valerius Maximus, Plutarch, Appian, and possibly also Plautus and Terence.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, 102–5 (Vita 16).

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, 98–99 (Vita 9): "... postremo *Genealogiarum* opus in quindecos libros . . . quod inter omnia sua consensu omnium principatum tenet"; 100–101 (Vita 13).

<sup>30</sup> See David Marsh, "Boccaccio in the Quattrocento: Manetti's *Dialogus in symposio*," *Renaissance Quarterly*, 33 (1980), 337–50, 338. For Bruni's translation I have used Florence, Florence, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale [henceforth BNCF], MS Magl. IX.2, fols. 64r–85r.

<sup>31</sup> BNCF, MS Magl. IX.2, fol. 73r; cf. *Dec.*, IV.1.26: "... che tu di sottoporti a alcuno uomo, se tuo marito non fosse. . ."

<sup>32</sup> See Marsh, "Boccaccio," 339–41. I have consulted BNCF, MS Magl. IX.2, fols. 1–17r.

<sup>33</sup> BNCF, MS Magl. IX.2, fol. 3r–v: "Ad me e sempre paruto gentilissime donne che gliantichi greci dumanita e digentilezza di core abbino avanzato di gran lungha inostri italiani. Et sentitonella novella letta il crudele e duro coredi tancredi principe di salerno il qual per mal consiglio se medesimo dogni consolatione e la figliuola sua divita privo, me occorre per loppoito una novellao vero historia dun signor greco molto piu humano e savio che non fu tancredi come per effetto si puo mostrare." See Marsh, "Boccaccio," 341: "Based on a classical Greek historian rather than on a medieval source, Bruni's tale is meant to demonstrate the ethical superiority of ancient Greek civilization over the morality of medieval Italians."

In Bruni's retelling, Antiochus falls in love with his own step-mother, yet, concealing "the shameful flame" of his passion to the point of mortal illness, wins both his father's grace and permission to marry his wife.<sup>34</sup> Bruni is focused in these tales as much on fatherly authority as on a lover's suffering; and Antiochus, who represses his desires, eventually finds his happiness, unlike the self-willed Ghismunda.<sup>35</sup> Manetti for his part incorporates both stories into his *Dialogus in symposio*, a Latin discussion among Florentine exiles in the Veneto in 1448. Similar to Bruni's *novelle*, the two tales are offered as debating positions on paternal severity versus leniency towards one's children. Manetti departs from the *Decameron* by stating that Ghismunda "took no interest in maidenly shame" when she began her affair. Yet Antiochus, out of respect for his father, "chose to die then give vent to his vile wicked flame of love."<sup>36</sup> Tancredi had to punish his daughter and her lover, it is argued, for reasons of justice and honor.<sup>37</sup> The final judgment on the debate is uttered by the arbiter Michele Rondinelli, who finds Seleucus too lax by allowing his son to engage in incest and by offering hope to adulterers, thus threatening the integrity of marriage.<sup>38</sup> Ghismunda herself merited, he says, a more severe sentence, since she was "sole cause and origin of vile loves and all wickedness."<sup>39</sup>

<sup>34</sup> BNCF, MS Magl. IX.2, fol. 15r-v: "Et [il re] sentendo lareina niente saperne e ilgiovane per vergogna e riverenza del padre prima aver voluto morire che palezare la dionesta fiamma mosso da compassione e non potendo alle sue proprie ragioni assegnate al medico contradire, dilibero con perfetto consiglio e per conversation del figliuolo lasciar la sua donna." The contrast of parental indulgence versus harshness is, as Marsh notes, found in Valerius Maximus V, 7-8.

<sup>35</sup> In contrast to Marsh (*loc. cit.*), I do not see an "ethical antithesis" between these stories. See James Hankins's review of Bruni's "moral censorship" in his translation of the *Phaedrus*, in Hankins, *Plato in the Italian Renaissance* (2 vols.; Leiden, 1990), II, 396.

<sup>36</sup> I have used Florence, Bibliotheca Medicea Laurenziana [henceforth, BMLF], MS Laur. Plut. 90, sup. 29, fols. 1r-43v; 5v: "neque puellaris verecundie interesse arbitraretur"; 13r: "ob paternam venerationem mori quam turpem nefandorum amorum suorum flamam detengere maluisse. . ."

<sup>37</sup> BMLF, Laur. Plut. 90, sup. 29, fols. 14v-16r; in fact, compared to Brutus and Decimus Silanus, who slew their own children, his punishment was not severe enough (16v); see Marsh, "Boccaccio," 345, on the implicit use of Valerius Maximus.

<sup>38</sup> BMLF, Laur. Plut. 90, sup. 29, fols. 33r-34v; see Marsh, "Boccaccio," 347.

<sup>39</sup> BMLF, Laur. Plut. 90, sup. 29, fol. 35v: "Sigismunda insuper multo magis quam Guiscardum errasse ac deliquisse cognoscimus: quam et nephandorum amorum et omnes etiam flagitii sola causa et origo fuisse traditur: et ideo eam iustus et severus iudex gravior punire debebat; quod quidem tancredus non fecisset paterna gratia impeditus."

As do Bruni and Manetti, Matteo Palmieri in his *Vita civile* seeks to contain the *Decameron's* legacy in order to support his vision of civic morality.<sup>40</sup> The work's interlocutors, isolated from Florence by a plague in the 1430's, discuss the most appropriate ways to become upstanding members of society. Thus while Palmieri borrows the *Decameron* frame and its use of the vernacular, he says without irony that Boccaccio is a distant third of the three crowns:

would God that his vernacular books were not filled with such lascivious and dissolute examples of love, I believe it certain that should he have written just as aptly of moral matters and precepts of good living he would deserve to be called Chrysostom rather than Boccaccio. And furthermore his vernacular books would have benefited our customs, whereas as it now stands I believe they have harmed and still harm many.<sup>41</sup>

Palmieri consciously intends therefore to amend the flaws of the *Decameron* in his own work. Alberti however read the *Decameron* differently, in a way true to its subversive spirit, and this reading deepened his wit of despair, the black humor that characterizes many of these dinner pieces. For the *Decameron* brought Alberti both profit and problem.

The profit comes from the atmosphere of relaxed subversion and buoyant parody. Boccaccio tells his critics that his work is designed not for the clerics or the philosophers, but for more carefree men and women residing in a *luogo di solazzo*, gardens and the like.<sup>42</sup> The

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<sup>40</sup> In this effort at literary containment they could find a predecessor in Giovanni Sercambi. Sercambi's late fourteenth-century *Novelle* recounts how the story-tellers fled the plague in Lucca. But the work considers the pestilence a punishment for sinfulness. Aluisi, the leader of the *brigata*, expresses their devotion to conventional moral authority. See Giovanni Sercambi, *Novelle*, ed. Giovanni Sinicropi (2 vols.; Bari, 1972).

<sup>41</sup> Matteo Palmieri, *Vita civile*, ed. Gino Belloni (Florence, 1982), 6–7 (Proemio 11–12): “. . . volesse Dio che i suoi libri volgari non fussino ripieno di tanta lascivia e dissoluti exempli d'amore, ché certo credo che, avendo così attamento scripto cose morali et precepti di ben vivere, non meriterebbe essere chiamato Boccaccio ma più tosto Chrisostomo. Et oltre a questo gioverebbono i suoi libri volgari a' nostri costumi, dove in questo modo credo abbino nociuto e nuochino a molti.” In a playfully self-referential way, Boccaccio himself translates Chrysostom as “san Giovanni Boccadoro” in *Dec.* I.6.7: see Janet Levarie Smarr, “The Tale of the Inquisitor (I.6)” in *The Decameron First Day in Perspective: Volume One of the “Lectura Boccaccii,”* ed. Elissa B. Weaver (Toronto, 2004), 148–59, especially 157–58.

<sup>42</sup> Boccaccio, *Dec.*, Concl. 7: “Appresso assai ben si può cognoscere queste cose non nella chiesa . . . né ancora nelle scuole de' filosofanti . . . né tra cherici né tra

*Decameron* challenges ecclesiastical authority and its moral conceptions; its narrators reside outside the realm of the diseased city and its institutions. Alberti employed Boccaccio's methods of ironic subversion for his guests seated around his dinner table, their *luogo di sollazzo*. His irony in turn strikes home against the philosophical and moral authorities of the Quattrocento. Like Boccaccio, Alberti scrutinizes his contemporaries for their reputation for virtue, and for their ability to judge virtue in others. His predicament, an all too conscious one, was that his guests, like himself, were also scholars and philosophers. They themselves were the authorities he exposed to irony. Alberti's self-consciousness and self-reflection permeate his irony, shading it a darker psychological, more analytical color, than that of Boccaccio. But the irony is there, as a negative quality, undermining the self-assured wisdom of contemporary humanism. If this humanism re-discovered Plato, then it is Alberti who revives the ironic spirit of Socrates, a spirit already conjured by the *Decameron*.<sup>43</sup>

We can measure the impression of the *Decameron* upon the *Intercenales* by exploring those stories which treat of the erotic and erotic deception. I concentrate on three stories from the *Intercenales*: *Maritus* ["The Husband"], *Defunctus* ["The Deceased"], and *Uxoriam* ["Marriage"].<sup>44</sup>

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filosofi in alcun luogo ma ne' giardini, in luogo di sollazzo, tra persone giovani benché mature e non pieghevoli per novelle. . . ." In Proem 9 and IV.intro., Boccaccio suggests that he is writing explicitly for women.

<sup>43</sup> For a statement on the potential Socratic nature of the comic, see Petrarch's remark in the *Rerum memorandarum* under the heading "De facetiis ac salibus illustrium": "Quanto melius Cato ille Censorius, qui non artem que non erat pollicetur, sed ipsos iocos ac facetias tam socratorum, qui in hac re nomen habent apud Grecos sicut apud nos Plautus, quam ceterorum studiose recollegit!" in *Rerum memorandarum libri*, ed. Giuseppe Billanovich (Florence, 1943), 69, lines 39–42 (II.37.8). Billanovich notes the reference to *De off.* 1 xxix 104. We shall see traces of Plautine humor in Alberti's dialogues. On Alberti's position as an outsider to or indeed critic of the conventions of Medicean civic humanism, see Rinaldi, *Melancholia christiana* (Florence 2002), 106–10, with regard to his *Vita S. Poitii*; Luca Boschetto, "Tra politica e letteratura: Appunti sui *Profugionum libri* e la cultura di Firenze negli anni '40," *Albertiana*, 3 (2000): 119–40; and Paolo Viti, "Leon Battista Alberti e la politica cultura fiorentina premedicea" in *Leon Battista Alberti: Actes du congrès international*, ed. Furlan (Paris, 2000), I, 69–85. Cf. Riccardo Fubini's more general declaration of "the double spirit of humanism—the institutional and the rebellious," in his essay "Renaissance Humanism and its Development in Florentine Civic Culture," in *Palgrave Advances in Renaissance Historiography*, ed. Jonathan Woolfson (New York, 2005), 118–38, at 127.

<sup>44</sup> The edition of the *Intercenales* cited is that of Franco Bacchelli and Luca D'Ascia (Bologna, 2003); the English edition and translation is by David Marsh: *Dinner Pieces* (Binghamton, 1987).

A guiding thread in our exploration of irony will be erotic deception, arguably the most common attribute of Boccaccio's hundred stories.

## 1

One of the richest tales of erotic intrigue in the *Decameron* is the tale of the widow Elena and the scholar Rinieri (*Dec.* VIII.7). The tale, told by the narrator Pampinea, shows us how Boccaccio uses irony to expose a character's flaws and self-contradictions. Rinieri, more deft in metaphysics than in the art of love, allows himself to be duped by Elena's blandishments, spending a cold night locked outside in her courtyard while she entertains another lover. He then devises his revenge, luring her to a tower upon which she, naked and exposed to the sun, is subjected to his mockery and harangue against the perfidious nature of women. And yet the irony is that Rinieri's vengeance and women-hating diatribe say as much about his character as they do about Elena's comeuppance. His actions and words reveal him to be weak, cruel, and bigoted, rather than, as he imagines, clever, triumphant, and rational.<sup>45</sup>

As a rule the *Intercenales* have little good to say about scholars; but the irony in his story *Maritus* adapts subtly and creatively that of the *Decameron*.<sup>46</sup> At the outset of the tale an aged and experienced humanist, who recounts how a husband returns home unexpectedly as his young wife is entertaining her lover. The husband confronts the lover, but instead of punishing him, he offers him his friendship along with a rebuke for his shameful behavior. To his wife the husband maintains a cheerful demeanor while at the same time refus-

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<sup>45</sup> This assessment of VIII.7 agrees in some measure with the views expressed by Robert Hollander, *Boccaccio's Last Fiction, "Il Corbaccio"* (Philadelphia, 1988), 18–23, who in turn cites Millicent Marcus, "Misogyny as Misreading: A Gloss on *Decameron* VIII.7," *Stanford Italian Review*, 4, no. 1 (Spring, 1984), 23–40. For a more detailed discussion, see my *The Poet's Wisdom*, 246–51.

<sup>46</sup> *Intercenales*, 453–69. See the critiques of humanist-scholars in *Corolle (Intercenales)*, 243–59) and in his preface to Book VII (*ibid.*, 446, lines 35–41): "Cum autem sibi ad rem tenendam plus quam oscitans opinabatur adesse negotii intellexit, tum omni librorum copia contendit, ac si ipsis libris, non acerrimo nostro studio, dicendi simus rationem adepturi; cumque sese eloquentie locos satis preter ceteros quisque tenuisse opinetur, fit inter nos ut non [in] consequenda ipsi laude, sed in aliis carpendis et redarguendis fatigemur."



ing her all physical affection. His wife becomes consumed with remorse, and eventually dies of her sense of guilt.<sup>47</sup>

We hear echoes of the irony in Pampinea's tale of Rinieri and Elena. It addresses a question in common with that of Boccaccio's work: a man is deceived by a woman—how does he, or should he respond? Pampinea's scholar can be considered to overstep his bounds in physically torturing the woman who spurned him. Alberti understood this irony directed toward the scholar, and presented his readers with a husband who, with his tremendous emotional coldness, with his absolute, unwavering obsession with social decorum, *psychologically* tortures his wife to death.

A cold husband's laughter or slumber can break a woman's ardent wrath and burning fury. . . . How do you think his wife felt? What terrible discord between apprehension and assurance tormented her mind? Living in squalid grief and solitude, she was damned by her own guilt.<sup>48</sup>

The husband has no real love for his wife, just as Rinieri cannot be said to love Elena, except in his erotic fantasy of self-fulfillment.

But it is this erotic quality that helps us differentiate between the *Decameron* tale and the dinner piece, and it reveals the nature of Alberti's adaptation. Boccaccio's narrators almost invariably comment on physical beauty as the spark or aim of erotic instinct.<sup>49</sup> If

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<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, 462, line 160–463, line 185: “Nam in rebus ceteris esset istiusmodi, ut ad facilitatem erga uxorem addi nihil posset, una tantum in re vindicis partes servavit, ut ex ea die posteaquam corruptam esse uxorem cognovit . . . in illam tum incaluisse ad liberis operam dandam visus est nunquam. . . . Misera mulier! Que his gravissimis et molestissimis curis confecta in eam est valitudinem collapsa, ut consumptis in dies viribus, abesa et penitus extenuata, defecerit. . . .”

<sup>48</sup> *Dinner Pieces*, 132; *Intercenales*, 464, lines 167–72: “Ardentem ira et flagrantem furore feminam frigans vir ridendo et dormitando frangit. . . . Ed quid putas sentire hanc de se mulierem, quam atrox animi certamen, metus adversus fiduciam, excruciat? Que in luctu, in squalore, in solitudine, sui ipsius conscientia damnata vitam ducebat, que in tantis suis occultis doloribus. . . .”

<sup>49</sup> At one moment in Pampinea's tale Rinieri is taken aback in his plan for vengeance: he becomes aroused by Elena's naked splendor before the tower: (VIII.7.66–67): “. . . e passondogli ella quasi alloto cosi ignuda e egli veggendo lei con la bianchezza del suo corpo vincere le tenebre della notte e appresso riguardandole il petto e l'altre parti del corpo e vedendole belle e seco pensando quali infra piccol termine dovean divenire, sentí de lei alcuna compassione; e d'altra parte lo stimolo della carne l'assali subitamente e fece tale in piè levare che si giaceva e confortavolo che egli da guato uscisse e lei andasse a prendere e il suo piacere ne facesse: e vincin fu a essere tra dall'uno e dall'altro vinto.” Note by contrast the husband's repression in refusing the wife's advances “tametsi omnibus illecebris a

Boccaccio's tales gravitate toward the contact of the flesh, Alberti's story orbits about the psyche or the mind. The narrator of the story explains clearly the husband's motivations: the maintenance of his honor and social standing. We might call these motivations displaced or sublimated, but they are certainly, in the narrator's eyes, more laudable than that.<sup>50</sup> The wife's slow decline is also internal, psychological, not the external, physical suffering of Elena. In her guilt she becomes desperate for her husband's forgiveness, and when he denies her this, she succumbs to her regret.

The differences in *Maritus* from Boccaccio's tale intensify inwardly the earlier, corporeal cruelty of Rinieri. And just as Alberti, like Boccaccio, raises questions indirectly about the cuckold's character, these questions, once raised, cast a shadow on the narrator. The irony is indeed directed toward the protagonist, who resides in a self-contradiction—for his 'justice' is really cruelty, his 'mildness' really severity. Yet as this irony is unnoticed by the storyteller, it catches the storyteller as well. Boccaccio's Pampinea presents her tale of Rinieri and Elena as a warning to women against duping men, especially scholars; Elena's punishment, she says, is a "just retribution."<sup>51</sup> But the women listening to her tale are not convinced: on the contrary they find a certain compassion for her suffering, and a definite heartlessness in Rinieri's actions.<sup>52</sup>

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formosissima, amatoris in artibus callidissima exercitatissimaque coniuge impetere-tur" (*Intercenales*, 462, lines 163–64).

<sup>50</sup> Thus the narrator cites counsels of the husband—which he calls the "graves et dignos memoratu" (460, line 102)—including the advice to preserve the husband's honor by his discretion (458, lines 76–79): "Quod si quippiam abs te pro accepto beneficio debere nobis non negas, fili mi, age, da operam ut, dum tue et vite et fame hodierna die plurimum concessi, tu ne honori quidem nostro per te uspiam detractum iri velis."

<sup>51</sup> The original Italian appears in note 52 below.

<sup>52</sup> *Dec.* VIII.7.3: "... ma io intendo di farvi avere alquanto compassione d'una giusta retribuzione a una nostra cittadina renduta, alla quale la sua beffa presso che con morte, essendo beffata, ritornò sopra il capo." She adds that: "E questo udire non sarà senza utilità di voi, per ciò che meglio di beffare altrui vi guarderete, e farete gran senno." But see the women's reaction (VIII.8.2): "Gravi e noiosi erano stati i casi d'Elena a ascoltare alle donne, ma per ciò che in parte giustamente avventutigli gli estimavano, con più moderata compassione gli avean trapassati, quantunque rigido e constatemente fieramente, anzi crudele, reputassero lo scolare." This is not the first time Pampinea becomes entangled in irony: see her pronouncements in *Dec.* I.10, which I have discussed in "The Modality of Moral Communication in the *Decameron's* First Day, in Contrast to the Mirror of the *Exemplum*," *Renaissance Quarterly*, 54 (2001), 1035–73, esp. 1060–66.

Alberti expresses this irony toward his narrator more discretely. The story of the husband is recounted amid the *solazzo* of the humanist circle, just as Pampinea tells her narrative to the *lieta brigata*. The aged narrator praises the husband's example as one that exceeds the one-sided tolerance of Socrates, for the husband was a greater master of his household: he was an exemplar of rigor countered by mildness.<sup>53</sup> Alberti records no responses to the narrator's story among the scholarly conclave; we shall note a similar silence in the story following this one in the *Intercenales*, *Uxoriam*. But even the most sympathetic humanist listener could find the narrator's praise of the husband excessive, and this listener could also contest the narrator's claim that "in taking revenge, he [the husband] combined severity with supreme indulgence and remarkable tolerance."<sup>54</sup> We know from Alberti's vernacular dialogues that he considered revenge to be beneath the actions of an honorable man.<sup>55</sup> Is the husband as honorable as the narrator supposes? If not, what is Alberti saying about the moral standards of this gathering, which attends to the husband as a domestic *exemplum*?

We let these questions stand, since they are what the irony asks, but does not answer. The irony towards the narrator exposes his or

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<sup>53</sup> *Intercenales*, 454, lines 1–5: "Cum de re uxoria deque mulierum ingenio versuto et volubili inter familiares meos apud me sermones haberentur, multisque modis vulgatum illud Catonis approbarentur, maritum, qui se bonum gerat, laude esse dignum, quesitum est, quenam leges maritum bonum constituerent, desiderandane in coniuge sit facilitas potius an severitas. . ."; *ibid.*, 468, lines 223–34: "Quid Socrates ille ipse deorum approbatione sapientissimus, que contumacia immodeste uxoris didicit apud ceteros cives et peregrinos facilitatem atque humanitatem servare. . .? Sciverit ille quidem uxoris vitium [tolerare, certe non scivit] tollere. . . Annon vestris sententiis maritus hic noster multo erat omnibus preferendus? . . . qui non eodem continuo vultu solum, ut Grecus ille, verum et amplius eadem stabili et constanti perseverantia in suscepto animi instituto laudatissimo perstitit. . ."

<sup>54</sup> *Dinner Pieces*, 133; *Intercenales*, 468, lines 234–35: ". . . summaque et mirifica cum indulgentia et facilitate coniunctam severitatem vindicando servavit."

<sup>55</sup> E.g. *Deifira*, 240, lines 21–22, in the words of Filarco: "Amore non vuole vendetta. Vendetta viene da nimistà." And Teogenio's advice to Microtiro: "Più te molto loderò se tu verso chi sé opponta a te inimico porgerai amore più che odio, umanità più che indignazione, facilità più che contumacia, poiché ogni perturbazione d'animo più nuoce a chi in sé la sente che verso cui ella sia addirittura" (*Theogenius*, 98, lines 18–22); Pandolofini's comments to Niccola de' Medici: "Ad Antistenes filosofo pareva niuna disciplina migliore in vita che disimperare el ricordarsi delle offese. Aristotile negeva essere opera d'animo grande e forte refricarsi a mente *presertim* quel che dispiace" (*Profugiorum*, 135, lines 2–5). See also Roberto Cardini's commentary on *Maritus* in his *Mosaici: Il "nemico" dell' Alberti* (Rome, 1990), 45–46.

her vain desire to dictate meaning. Yet irony ultimately pursues the reader: it casts aside facile presuppositions, and hounds the reader into new answers or confusion.<sup>56</sup> Like Boccaccio through his Pampinea, Alberti allows his narrative personae in *Maritus* and elsewhere to be called into question, and uses irony as a method of presenting readers with the surface of meaning, calling on them to establish the foundation.

## 2

A deeper and more thorough-going use of this irony toward the narrator presents itself in Alberti's *Defunctus*. The longest of the *Intercenales*, this is a dialogue that takes place in the afterlife between the friends Neophronus ["newly wise"] and Polytropus ["versatile"].<sup>57</sup> J. H. Whitfield has commented on the subtleties of this dialogue, calling into question a simple reading, based on Neophronus's lugubrious narration, of Alberti's pessimism.<sup>58</sup> When we read the text in light of the irony introduced by Boccaccio, a clearer pattern emerges that forces us to challenge any presumption of narrative authority.

In the dialogue Neophronus is on his way to the underworld when he encounters Polytropus. He recounts that after his death he has discovered the infidelity of those closest to him—wife, son, servants,

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<sup>56</sup> Alberti shows us this in his dinner story of *Nummus* ["The Coin"]. "Most erudite and sagacious priests [*literatissimi prudentissimique sacerdotes*]," he tells us, pray to Apollo to show them the highest divinity (*Intercenales*, 148, lines 1–2); Apollo's oracle leads them to a coin on the altar, and the priests rejoice in his wisdom and their material gain. But the Pythian oracle's actual statement to the priests is "Tomorrow's light will show the god you seek upon the altar" (*Dinner Pieces*, 51) ["*crastina lux numen quesitum ostendet in ara*"; *Intercenales*, 150, line 32]. A reader is justified in seeing the irony here, and in noting that the priests were all along at heart mercenary, and worshipped money. So the story turns from being a story about the basic material nature of religion, in which Apollo himself is implicated, to one about a mercenary clergy. Its denouement is no longer anti-religious, but anti-ecclesiastical. That the priests "mis-interpret" the oracle is left for the reader to discover; the reader must unveil the irony for himself or herself.

<sup>57</sup> See David Marsh's analysis of the story in relation to Lucian's *The Downward Journey*, in Marsh, *Lucian and the Latins*, 51–58, and his translations of the names in *Dinner Pieces*, 247.

<sup>58</sup> J. H. Whitfield, "Alberti in the *Intercenali*: I: *Defunctus*," *Italian Studies*, 46 (1991), 58–68.

and kinsmen—and concludes that “[l]ife is an evil to be shunned.”<sup>59</sup> Polytropus at first sympathizes with his friend’s suffering, and then becomes more critical. He shares Neophronus’s view of human folly but believes it may be countered by virtue and wisdom, which can restrain our vain desires.<sup>60</sup> Despite this difference in viewpoints, the dialogue examines the nature of deception, both by one’s beloved and of one’s self, as did *Maritus* and the story of Rinieri and Elena. It also expands the theme of deception to embrace the entire domestic arena, including one’s children.

In discussing his wife, Neophronus stresses his naïve trust not only in her sexual fidelity but also in the loyalty of a young servant.<sup>61</sup> Polytropus remarks that women must be watched in order to save their chastity, and both men complain of the depraved, treacherous, and faithless nature of women.<sup>62</sup> While it would be easy, as Whitfield states, to align these remarks with other women-hating statements in Alberti’s works, we should follow Boccaccio’s example and observe the narrative context.<sup>63</sup> Slowly but surely in the course of the dialogue we learn about Neophronus’s character, and we must condition any interpretation of his remarks, as we did with Rinieri, based upon this character.

Polytropus suggests that Neophronus has died of a ripe old age.<sup>64</sup> It is likely therefore that he is older than his wife. In addition Neophronus boasts that he has busied himself in his studies to the

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<sup>59</sup> *Dinner Pieces*, 122; *Intercenales*, 428, line 1166: “Rem [i.e. vitam] quidem fugiendam. . . .”

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, 436, lines 1269–92, a passage that modifies Cicero’s *De legibus*, as Whitfield has noted (“Alberti,” 66–67). Whitfield, in his claim for Polytropus as the spokesman for Alberti, does not show how his character fails to escape the irony that permeates the dialogue, as we shall note below. Similarly Ponte, *Leon Battista Alberti*, 43, cites Polytropus as “il savio.” Alberti may have adapted here a dialogue between Ratio and Metus from Petrarch’s *De remediis utriusque fortune* (II.128): “De moriente anxio quid uxor, eo mortuo, sit actura.” See Petrarch, *Les remèdes aux deux fortunes* = *De remediis utriusque fortune: 1354–1366*, ed. and tr. Christophe Carraud (2 vols.; Grenoble, 2002), I, 1124–27.

<sup>61</sup> *Intercenales*, 364, lines 146–366, at line 191. Polytropus for his part initially expresses his mistrust in the servant, but faith in Neophronus’s wife (366, lines 177–183).

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, 368, lines 198–374, at line 289.

<sup>63</sup> Whitfield, “Alberti,” 63.

<sup>64</sup> *Intercenales*, 378, lines 362–63: “In senem fuitne, in te filius adolescens impius, in patrem?”

neglect of his “family duties,” and talks of his body as a “foul cadaver.”<sup>65</sup> Perhaps, one may imagine, his literary preoccupations and his disengagement from sensual life have sparked his wife’s sexual interest in other men. Both his literary devotion and Stoic disdain for the corporeal might be admired by certain scholar-humanists, but not by his wife; and his literary accomplishments, despite his boasting, also seem meagre.<sup>66</sup>

The contours of Neophronus’s character become more defined in his subsequent distress. He hears his son rejoicing in his death for having lost such a severe master, and accuses him of ingratitude and impiety. Polytropus seconds his outrage, calling Neophronus “dutiful” and “indulgent.”<sup>67</sup> We first encountered the contrast between parental severity and indulgence in the novelle of Bruni and Manetti. *Defunctus*, like *Maritus*, follows this thematic, and elaborates without didacticism upon Lionardo’s advice to Adovardo in the first book of the *Della famiglia*. Lionardo states:

Severity without kindness [*umanità*] produces more hate than obedience. Kindness, the more easy and free of any harshness it is, the more it wins love and acceptance. Nor do I call it solicitude [*diligenza*] if a man, more like a tyrant than a father, inquires too exactly into everything. This kind of severity and harshness usually makes young minds resentful and ill disposed to their elders rather than submissive. A noble mind by nature resents being treated like a slave instead of like a son.<sup>68</sup>

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<sup>65</sup> *Dinner Pieces*, 111 (*Intercenales*, 394, lines 631–32: “rei familiaris cura”); *ibid.*, 101 (*Intercenales*, 366, lines 169–70: “An isti insanissimi non sunt, qui me isthac in fece illigatum esse velint, quam pre fetore mox abicient?”); and *ibid.*, 432, lines 1218–21: “Tantum iccirco abest, ut ipso me perfrui posse existimans cupiam de integro in corpus recludi, ut quidvis potius patiar quem in illam ipsam putridam et fetidam crassitudinem carnis. . . .”

<sup>66</sup> See *ibid.*, 400, line 710 – 404, line 785, and Whitfield’s shrewd observations on the limited extent of his writing (“Alberti,” 63). Neophronus also reminds the reader of Boccaccio’s elderly judge Riccardo di Chinzica, who on account of his pious withdrawal from sex witnesses his young wife Bartolomea sail off with the lusty pirate Paganino (*Dec.* II.10).

<sup>67</sup> *Intercenales*, 380, lines 384–85: “Abisti iam [says the son], neque amplius, aderis, severe; iam aberis, indignissime decrepite”; 378, lines 368–70: “Vede ne temere id credas bene moratos adolescentes in te impios fuisse, quem ceteri, tum maxime filii ipsi facillimum et in omni re longe omnium piissimum patrem experti sunt” (*Dinner Pieces*, 105–6).

<sup>68</sup> Slightly revising Watkins, *Family*, 88–89; *OV*, I, 78, lines 16–24: “La severità senza umanità acquista più odio che autorità. L’umanità quanta sarà più facile e più seguita da ogni durezza, tanto più meriterà benivolenza e grazia. Né chiamo diligenza, quale par costume più di tiranni che de’ padri, monstrarsi nelle cose

But what is the character of Neophronus? Like that of Rinieri, it unfolds to the reader in the course of the dialogue, contradicting his own self-assessment.

Later in this conversation Polytropus recounts Neophronus's frugality in sharing his wine with him as his closest friend; and Neophronus himself considers the expense of his own funeral to be wasteful.<sup>69</sup> Could there be something genuine in the accusation made by his relatives, who, being omitted from his will, call him *avarissimum, cupidissimum, ingrattissimum*?<sup>70</sup> In other words, could Neophronus unwittingly indict himself by citing the criticism of others? An answer is provided by the final scene he describes. He sees his enemy uncovering a fortune he had hidden in an aqueduct. The fortune, he claims, was intended for his heirs. But Polytropus chastises him for hoarding it, and suggests that he indeed is avaricious and mistrustful of those closest to him.<sup>71</sup>

Readers therefore may learn, as they may with Rinieri or the Husband, to suspect the character of the self-proclaimed victim.<sup>72</sup> Is Neophronus indeed "newly wise"? For despite his new awareness of human folly, he still does not see how he merits the disdain of his wife and family. He is full of self-pity at the end, proclaiming how fortune favors the wicked.<sup>73</sup> He therefore misses the irony of Polytropus's final statement as he leads him to the underworld:

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troppo curioso. E fanno queste austeritati e durezza più volte diventare gli animi contro e' maggiori molto più sdegnosi e maligni che ubbidienti. E hanno e' gentili ingegni in sé per male ove siano non come figliuoli ma come servi trattati."

<sup>69</sup> *Intercenales*, 384, lines 456–58: "... cum ad te ipse accedebam unicus fidissimus amicus ut potarem, quam potera minimos cyathos, quam inveniebas minorem phialem apponebas. . . ."; *ibid.*, 390, lines 540–41: "Ceterum carere pompis funerilibus quare obsit non intelligo; fortassis prodest ad parsimoniam."

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*, 388, lines 517–18: "... omnium avarissimum, omnium cupidissimum esse me ingrattissimumque vociferant."

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*, 420, lines 1026–29: "Quid enim quidem, qui avaritia aut alia quaque stultitia rem ad coniunctum hominum et societatem accomodatissimam ac maxime necessariam, pecuniam, de medio sustulerit atque suppresserit, huncne hominem negabimus vehementer errare?"

<sup>72</sup> Neophronus therefore resembles the character of the greedy old man, a staple of Roman comedy. See especially Euclio's vain attempt to hide his treasure in Plautus's *Aulularia*; also, Terence's preface to his *Heauton Timorumenos*. As a further potential subtext for *Defunctus*, Petrarch's *Rerum memorandarum* attributes to Seneca the statement of Publilius Syrus: "Avarus nichil recte facit nisi cum moritur," and explains: "Sic est profecto: vivens enim nulli bonus, nec sibi nec alteri, moriens heredem voti compotem facit et se curis liberat, nulli malus." *Rerum memorandarum*, ed. Billanovich, 180, lines 18–23 (III.93.3).

<sup>73</sup> *Intercenales*, 426, lines 1109–11: "Est iccirco ut aiunt: fortuna malos diligit, odit

Pol.: Don't you know that the destruction you cause in life is repaid by the punishments you must suffer after death?

Neo.: I shall [follow].<sup>74</sup>

In the *Decameron*, the frame story makes way for a narrator's lesson to be applauded or countered by the other nine participants.<sup>75</sup> The *Intercenales* as a whole lack a framing device. Yet many of them deliberately engage debate: at the opening of *Maritus*, the conclusion of *Defunctus*, or even in the quarrel among the slaves in *Felicitas* ["Happiness"], who argue who among them has suffered the most.<sup>76</sup> In addition, the repeated use in the *Intercenales* of certain personae, such as Lepidus and Libripeta, permits the reader to contrast their views over a series of episodes.

### 3

The debate at the heart of the story *Uxorina* returns to the theme of cuckoldry, of a man's fear of its effect on his reputation, and of the relation between fathers and sons. Alberti dedicated an Italian version of this piece to Piero de' Medici: "You will find," he writes Piero in a Horatian mode, "that its subject is witty and humorous, and not without use as advice for living; and it will strike you, I think, as treated with some method and maturity."<sup>77</sup> The "method"

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probos; male merentibus bene facit, in eos vero, qui aspirare ad decus et laudem nituntur, infesta est; favet nequissimis, obstat optimis."

<sup>74</sup> *Dinner Pieces*, 125; *Intercenales*, 440, lines 1326–30: "Polytropus: . . . An ignoratis quantas cum vivi ruinas, tum mortui poenas subituri sitis pro talibus flagitiis? . . . Neophronus: I pre. Sequar." We may therefore sense the blindness not only of Rinieri, but also of the Guide in Boccaccio's later work, the *Corbaccio*, who criticizes his wife from the afterlife to her lover. See Hollander, *Boccaccio's Last Fiction*.

<sup>75</sup> With regard to Pampinea, who tells the story of Rinieri and Elena, it is Emilia who most consistently checks her moral program. Thus Emilia's story on Day IX (IX.9), of Joseph and Melissus, implicitly critiques Pampinea's complacency with Rinieri's actions. While Joseph beats his wife in order to bend her to his will, Melissus is told by the sage simply to love in order to be loved. See my *The Poet's Wisdom*, 252–56.

<sup>76</sup> The quarrel is relative to their ages: it is a prose picture of the "ages of man" contesting among them who is most miserable. *Intercenales*, 72–78.

<sup>77</sup> *Dinner Pieces*, 135; *Intercenales*, 516: ". . . la vederai materia scritta pur faceta e iocosa e non inutile in vita a congliarsi, e parratti, credo, trattata da me non in tutto sanza modo et degna maturità."



involves irony and therefore unexpected reversals that require the reader's engagement. Not only is this method consistent with the style of *Maritus* and *Defunctus*, it also provokes the reader to reconsider the meaning of the preceding stories, similar to the manner of the *Decameron*.<sup>78</sup> Its irony turns sharper and more explicit, leading the characters—and the reader—into a negative territory in which the striving for civic virtue, so dear to Alberti's fellow humanists, is shown to be not ennobling, but on the contrary a vain, acrimonious endeavor.

*Uxor* is set in ancient Sparta. A father has three sons and promises his insignia, his awards for serving the state, to the one who proves himself most virtuous. Some years after his death, the three brothers convene the council of elders to judge their character. Each chooses to talk about his domestic life, specifically his thoughts on marriage. The eldest, Mitio ["Mildness"], being faced with his wife's unruly temper and desires, bore her scandals patiently, like a Stoic sage facing the tempests of fortune. With his calm reserve, he called upon his wife to change her behavior. The second brother, Acrinnus ["Harshness"], however, criticizes the first for his tolerance. The second brother's way of preserving his reputation was to spy vigilantly on his wife and limit her freedom. The youngest brother Trissophus ["Thrice-Wise"] claims to have trumped the others by not marrying at all, against his relatives' wishes. For he recognized, from his brothers' misfortunes, the danger of female fickleness and lust. Yet the Spartan council, after hearing these three presentations of virtue—the lenient, the severe, and the independent—withhold their award of the insignia, and ask for more time to deliberate.<sup>79</sup>

We can see how the story is first of all a commentary on the value of the Husband's example in *Maritus*. Mitio's restraint does not rule his wife, either not at first, by his own estimation, or perhaps not at all, according to Trissophus.<sup>80</sup> His psychological acumen falls

<sup>78</sup> See my "The Modality of Moral Communication," esp. 1055–56.

<sup>79</sup> *Intercenales*, 472–514; I follow again Marsh's translations of the names, *Dinner Pieces*, 251.

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*, 490, lines 237–39: "Prestat igitur dissimulare et que videas non videre, siquidem indomitum animal, ut aiunt, mulier frenare nusquam potest"; Trissophus makes the general statement (506, lines 482–87): "Etenim cum et hanc marito benignissimo et amantissimo nuptam et hanc alteram mirifica inauditaque custodia observatam non usquequaque matrimonii iura et conubii religionem servasse animadvertisset, sed alteram inexplebili fragrantique libidine preditam in dies novo amatore delectari, alteram nullo posse metu coerceri quin genitale impudentia sua torum commacularet. . . ."

short, and possibly backfires. The story therefore questions a husband's ability to manipulate the force of conscience in a resistant and in fact free subject, namely his wife.

More fundamentally the reader is asked to consider why the brothers fail to hear a verdict. What is the meaning of the elders' silence?<sup>81</sup> Building upon our previous analysis, we see that Alberti, like Boccaccio, presents through the form of his pieces, through the patterns of irony that they weave, a sense of hermeneutical latitude, an open-mindedness, that clears a space for protagonists, narrators, and readers to put unwittingly their errors on display. Since the brothers represent different faces of domestic authority, from the lenient to the severe, we are also reminded of Bruni's and Manetti's treatments of *Decameron novelle*, a treatment they used to underscore their morals about paternal gentleness and harshness. Alberti however in the *Intercenales* directs his irony even against such authorial intentions, along the lines of Boccaccio's irony toward Pampinea in *Decameron* VIII.7. We have seen indications of that in *Maritus*, but they may also be found in Alberti's own remarks that immediately follow *Uxorina*.

In the preface to Book VIII, Alberti recounts a musical contest between a cicada and a frog, with a crow as the judge. The cicada and frog traded insults, as each strove for renown. The crow, however, writes Alberti, "seemed to curse them with his wings, and crying loudly *cras, cras* ["tomorrow, tomorrow"] he flew away." Alberti then adds enigmatically: "I used to state my own opinion on each matter in fables like these, which I added as a sort of prologue to these books of Dinner Pieces. But in this case, I think I should refrain

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<sup>81</sup> Looking outside the text, one might point to Alberti's own experience in his *Certame coronario*, a public context of vernacular poetry on the theme of friendship, in which the judges decline to declare a winner of the poetic crown. Yet Alberti's anger over the judges' failure in this event was outspoken. See Gorni, "Storia," 167–72. It is difficult to see him directing his irony in this story toward the elders when the competition here was in an entirely different realm: of virtue, not learning; among brothers, not poets; and the competition proceeds in an entirely different way: the tone is accusatory, not amicable. Najemy ("Giannozzo," 73–75) interprets this silence as a verdict of joint failure, for the elders give the insignia to the eunuch priests of Cybele, the Great Mother. He reads the story as mocking the attempt of the father and sons to found a virtue "grounded in the hatred of women" (74–75). While the sons' failure implicates their father, I do not see how their virtue is based in their misogyny; as examined below, it founders in the way they speak to one another, on the loss of fraternal amity.

from doing so, not without reason."<sup>82</sup> Here is a clarification that resists a clarification, for he does not make explicit the "reason" for his restraint. His silence mirrors that of the crow, which relates to the refusal of the elders, just as the musical competition of the animals parallels the contest of the three brothers. Alberti tells us in this preface he has changed from his earlier practice of presenting morals, a practice that was problematic: for the morals did not always align with the stories, and underscored the author's lack of authority over his stories' meaning.<sup>83</sup> The "reason" that Alberti does not explicate consists in the very absence of explication. It stands as a warning: he is aware how limited an author's positive statement of meaning should be.

Alberti's caution against interpretation accords with the errors of understanding implicit in *Maritus*, to which both readers and protagonists are prone. Let us turn to the failings of paternal authority, as we did in *Defunctus*. At the end of the story the father's plan to pass down his merit, his honor to his sons has been in vain. Despite his prowess and care, his patrimony is held in abeyance, the seeds of virtue apparently sterile. We can better understand the elders' silence by comparing the story with the most obvious analogue in the *Decameron* (*Dec.* I.3). We should note that this episode from the *Decameron* is told without irony; yet Alberti uses the analogue here in a deeply ironic way, amplifying the tone he may have adopted from the *Decameron* in *Maritus* and *Defunctus*.

In the *Decameron* analogue, a father has three sons, but only one precious ring. He is unwilling or unable to decide which son is the most deserving, and therefore has two other rings made identical to

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<sup>82</sup> *Dinner Pieces*, 149; *Intercenales*, 530, line 21 – 532, line 25: “. . . plena cornix voce et quasi alis execrando: ‘cras, cras’ inquit et advolat. Consueveram in istiusmodi apologis, quasi prologi loco ad his edicare. Id hoc loco non sine causa a me esse pretermittendum statuo.”

<sup>83</sup> Consider the story of *Pupillus* [“The Orphan”] from Book I, which, Alberti implies, “warns us that from early youth we must steel ourselves against all of fortune’s vicissitudes.” (*Dinner Pieces*, 15; *Intercenales*, 2, lines 9–10: “admonet, uti ab ineunte etate quibus casibus fortune sit assuefaciendum”). Yet the valiant orphan of the story, despite his virtue and mental fortitude, despairs over the justice of the gods and prays, “. . . let orphans find the whole world full of hatred, betrayal, enmity, misfortune, and misery.” (*Dinner Pieces*, 18; *Intercenales*, 18, lines 84–85: “sed contra ansint pupillis omnia plena odii, insidiarum, inimicitiarum, calamitatum e miserie.”)

the first, with the result that no son is able to declare his pre-eminence. In this way he diffuses his sons' natural rivalry.

The Spartan father in Alberti's story, by contrast, fosters the fierce fraternal competition.<sup>84</sup> Note the difference: while Boccaccio's parent distributes his patrimony equally as a sign of his love, the Spartan wishes one son's virtue to stand publicly above the others'. Love is sacrificed to "virtue," as it is called—but what is this public virtue, if not the shell of the thing, an empty name, to which brotherhood is sacrificed? Faced with the exposure of virtue's fraudulence, the elders are rightly confounded. They judge a contest in which ironically there can be no public victors nor judges.<sup>85</sup> To Alberti's contemporaries the question is posed: what is decorum and civic virtue, when it requires, for its very name, jealous and bitter rivalry? This "civic virtue" is a masquerade, and is actually uncivil, dividing more than uniting.

We can see again how Alberti may have read the *Decameron* and furthered its irony for his own, Quattrocento purposes. Protagonists and their actions, as well as narrators and their intentions, must be viewed with scepticism by readers who attend to unexpected outcomes and revealing reversals. Alberti, similar to Boccaccio, was keenly interested in disguises, deceptions, and dissimulations. The central focus of his later *Momus*, but already the *Intercenales*, bears witness to his study of how outward appearances relate to reality—a study also, we may note, at the heart of his treatises on painting and perspective. Alberti's stories *Maritus*, *Defunctus*, and *Uxor* push the Boccaccian concerns into a deeper analysis of psychology and human motivations. They do so at the cost of neglecting the erotic; yet the loss of eros may have allowed Alberti to broaden his vision,

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<sup>84</sup> The father of the sons in Boccaccio's tale, who, the narrator says, "tutti e tre parimente gli amava" (*Dec.* I.3.12), does not permit them to compete with one another, although each son presses him for the ring. Alberti's father indeed speaks to his sons of his "nearly excessive love," but adds that ". . . in my love, I wish one of you to possess this splendid inheritance, which I think will make him surpass all other mortals in every kind of praise." (*Dinner Pieces*, 137; *Intercenales*, 478, line 64–480, line 68: "Id vos consilii si quid, filii mei fortassis improbaritis, una et immensum et prope nimium erga vos amorem improbetis necesse est, quo quidem fit ut, dum verstrum quem vis tam splendide hereditatis compotem fieri cupiam, is ipse apud me interea mortales omnis omni genere laudis multo precedere videatur.")

<sup>85</sup> In both the competition in virtue and that in music, the contestants struggle for public recognition, and denigrate one another. And like the cicada, frog, and crow, the Spartan participants lack a sensorium for the essence of the thing pursued.

and to investigate a wider array of joys and sorrows, along with more varied causes and reactions to civilized discontents. That these discontents, these *erumna*, come from the pressure of civilization itself, from the culture constructed by his fellow humanists, makes his irony towards it double-edged. It cuts away the pretenses not only of his contemporaries but also of himself.



CHAPTER EIGHT

THE “LOST” FINAL PART OF GEORGE AMIROUTZES’  
*DIALOGUS DE FIDE IN CHRISTUM*  
AND ZANOBI ACCIAIUOLI

John Monfasani

George Amiroutzes’ *Dialogus de Fide in Christum* is a unique work that deserves to be far better known.<sup>1</sup> After the conquest of his native Trebizond on the Black Sea by Mehmed the Conqueror in 1461, Amiroutzes entered Mehmed II’s household. The *Dialogus* purports to reflect a series of conversations Amiroutzes had with the Conqueror in which he defended Christian doctrine against Islamic criticism on the basis of rational argument. Though Amiroutzes doubtlessly took considerable liberty in embellishing his account—we are not dealing with a verbatim report but an acknowledged and, one may reasonably assume, much elaborated literary recreation—, these conversations between Amiroutzes and the Conqueror do seem to have actually taken place.<sup>2</sup> Nowhere else do we have an account of an Ottoman sultan, let alone one of the greatest of the sultans, engaged in serious arguments about Christianity and Islam.

But before we examine the substance and context of the *Dialogus*, we need to confront its peculiar *fortuna*. We are lucky to have the

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<sup>1</sup> On Amiroutzes (ca. 1400–after 1469) see the discussion and literature gathered by the editors of the *Dialogus*: Astérios Argyriou and Georges Lagarrigue, “Georges Amiroutzès et son «Dialogue sur la foi au Christ tenu avec le Sultan des turcs»,” *Byzantinische Forschungen*, 11 (1987), 29–222; and Óscar de la Cruz Palma, ed. and tr., *El Diálogo de la fe con el sultán de los turcos/Jorge Ameruzes de Trebisonda* (Madrid, 2000). One might also call attention to the online article of Pedro Bádenas (whom de la Cruz Palma thanks for directing his edition of the *Dialogus*), “Byzantine Intellectual Elites at the Court of Mehmet Fatih. Adaptation and Identity,” at <http://www.filol.csic.es/departamentos/bizantinos/mehmet.html>.

<sup>2</sup> The most telling evidence for the authenticity of the *Dialogus* is its reference to Mehmed’s attending physician Jacobo de Gaeta, a Jewish convert to Islam, known from Turkish sources; see Argyriou and Lagarrigue, “Georges Amiroutzès et son «Dialogue»,” 52, 156–59; and de la Cruz Palma, *El Diálogo*, 116.9.

text at all. Amiroutzes (ca. 1400–after 1469) wrote it between 1461 and his own death perhaps a decade later. No manuscript of the original Greek text survives. The text in fact survives by the thin thread of a Latin translation made in Rome in 1518. *Mirabile dictu*, we possess the autograph working copy of the translator as well as his autograph fine copy of the translation. Both are found in MS lat. 3395 of the Bibliothèque nationale de France. The first scholar to call attention to the translation and to this manuscript was Magnus Crusius (1697–1751).<sup>3</sup> Crusius spent the years 1723–28 in Paris as the preacher at the Danish embassy before returning home to Germany, where he became professor of theology at Göttingen in 1735.<sup>4</sup> In 1745 he published an eight page synopsis of the *Dialogus* as part of a program memorializing the granting of the degree of doctor of theology to two candidates at the University of Göttingen.<sup>5</sup> Since, as we shall see,<sup>6</sup> we possess the full text of the *Dialogus*, the most important part of Crusius' discussion is his report of the colophon on the now lost last folio of the autograph:

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<sup>3</sup> See the entries in *Deutsche biographische Enzyklopädie*, ed. Walther Killy (15 vols. to date; Munich, 1995–), II, 407; and *Allgemeine deutsche Biographie* (56 vols.; Berlin, 1967–71), IV, 633. Very useful is Georg Schalkhauser, *Zu den Schriften des Makarios von Magnesia* (Leipzig, 1907), 115–24.

<sup>4</sup> His first stay was in the years 1723 to 1727, but then he returned in 1728. During this time he also visited London and Oxford. Two works he produced in these years were *Magni Crusii, S. R. M. Danicae Legationis in Gallia Pastoris, Singularia Plessiaca, sive Memorabilia de Vita et Meritis, Fatis, Controversis, et Morte Philippi Mornaei de Plessis* (Hamburg, 1724); and *Dissertatio Epistolica ad Eminentissimum atque Reverendissimum Dn. Christianum Wormium . . . De Scriptis Quibusdam Integris Fragmentisque Hactenus Ineditis, Quae in Itinere Gallico, Anglico, atque Germanico Reperire Contigit* (Leipzig, 1728).

<sup>5</sup> *Ordinis Theologici in Academia Georgia Augusta H(oc) T(empore) Decanus Magnus Crusius Ss. Theol. D. et Prof. Publ. Ordin. Solemnia Inauguralia Virorum Summe et Maxime Reverendorum Dn. Wigandi Kahleri . . . et Dn. M. Christiani Kortholti . . . Ipso Natali Universitatis Nono MDCCXLV. D. XVII Septembris. Simulque De Georgii Ameruzae Philosophi Dialogo de Fide in Christum cum Rege Turcarum Nonnulla Praefatur* (Göttingen: Abram Vandenhoeck, 1745), a pamphlet of 32 pp. I thank Marc Deramaix for arranging for a photocopy of the exemplar in the Bibliothèque nationale de France to be sent to me. The pré-cis runs from p. 11 to p. 18. Pp. 19–21 give the *curriculum vitae* of Kahler, pp. 22–32 of Kortholt. The pretext for Crusius' discussion of the *Dialogus* was the fact that Kortholt (1709–1751) was presenting as his doctoral dissertation a work entitled *De Enthusiasmo Mohammedis*, which was published that same year at Göttingen by Vandenhoeck in a pamphlet of 48 pp.: *Disputatio Theologica Inauguralis de Enthusiasmo Mohammedis*.

<sup>6</sup> I first announced the identification of the anonymous translator and the existence of the supposedly lost part of the *Dialogus* in my review of de la Cruz Palma's edition in *Speculum*, 79 (2004), 1024–25.



...cujus [MS BnF, lat. 3395] auctor anonymus in fine Dialogi propria manu notavit, se translationem ejus absolvisse hora 2. noctis, quae insecuta est diem XII. Julii 1518. in Oratorio S. Sylvestri Montis Caballini.<sup>7</sup>

So, Anonymus finished his translation at the second hour of the evening of 12 July 1518 in the oratory of S. Silvestro a Montecavallo (today, "S. Silvestro al Quirinale") in Rome. In 1518 the Dominicans of the Florentine Congregation of S. Marco possessed S. Silvestro a Montecavallo.<sup>8</sup> *Prima facie*, one would suspect that Anonymus was the distinguished Florentine Hellenist Zanobi Acciaiuoli, O.P. (1461–1519), then resident at S. Silvestro.<sup>9</sup> Well-known today for his translations of Eusebius, Olympiodorus, and Theodoretus of Cyrillus,<sup>10</sup> and for briefly having been the Prefect of the Vatican Library,<sup>11</sup> he

<sup>7</sup> *Magnus Crusius . . . De Georgii Ameruzae Philosophi Dialogo*, 10. In the next clause Crusius states: "cujus MSu describendi copia mihi facta est." So he worked from an apograph he had commissioned of the Parisian manuscript. I have not located Crusius' copy. Schalkhauser, *Makaríos von Magnesia*, 116, n. 1, cites the sales catalogue *Catalogus Bibliothecae b. Magni Crusii d. 9. Dec. a. 1751 . . .* (Minden, 1751), but I have not been able to locate a copy.

<sup>8</sup> See Alberto Zucchi, *Roma domenicana: Note storiche* (4 vols.; Florence, 1938–43), II, 197–209. As Zucchi points out (II, 206), S. Silvestro was never a monastery but rather a residence with a few friars: "Veramente non fu mai la casa di S. Silvestro un convento, ma finchè la tenne l'Ordine rimase sempre un Vicariato con pochi frati."

<sup>9</sup> On Acciaiuoli see Jacques Quéfif and François Echard, *Scriptores Ordinis Praedicatorum* (2 vols.; Paris, 1719–23; reprint, New York, ca. 1959), I, 44–46; Giammaria Mazzuchelli, *Scrittori d'Italia* (5 vols.; Brescia, 1753–60), I.1, 50–53; A.-L. Redigonda, "Acciaiuoli, Zanobi," *Dizionario biografico degli italiani* (63 vols. to date; Rome, 1960–), I, 93–94; Zucchi, *Roma domenicana*, III, 63–65; Paul O. Kristeller, *Supplementum Ficinianum: Marsilii Ficini Florentini Philosophi Platonici Opuscula Inedita et Dispersa* (2 vols.; Florence, 1937), II, 334–35; and Carlo Dionisotti, *Machiavellerie* (Turin, 1980), 239–41.

<sup>10</sup> For his translation of the sixth-century Alexandrine deacon Olympiodorus' *In Ecclesiasten*, see Eugene F. Rice, Jr., *The Prefatory Epistles of Jacques Lefèvre d'Étaples and Related Texts* (New York, 1972), 283–87. For his activity in general as a translator, see Mario Claudio Vicario, "Zanobi Acciaiuoli e i padri della Chiesa: Autografi e traduzioni," in *Traduzioni patristiche nell'Umanesimo: Atti del Convegno Istituto Nazionale di Studi sul Rinascimento, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, Firenze, 6–8 febbraio 1997*, ed. Mariarosa Cortesi and Claudio Leonardi (Florence, 2000), 119–58. Also relevant is Miguel A. Granada, "Savonarole, Jean-François Pic de La Mirandole et l'apologétique: un programme non ficinien," in A. Fontes, J.-L. Fournel, and M. Plaisance, eds., *Savonarole: Ejeux, débats, questions. Actes du Colloque International (Paris, 25–26–27 janvier 1996)* (Paris, 1998), 275–90, for the connection of Acciaiuoli's translating activity to fideistic, anti-philosophic strains of thought.

<sup>11</sup> See Jeanne Bignami Odier, with the collaboration of José Ruysschaert, *La Bibliothèque Vaticane de Sixte IV à Pie XI* (Vatican City, 1973), 28–29. Leo X appointed him upon the death, on 30 August 1518, of the previous prefect, Filippo Beroaldo, the Younger. Acciaiuoli himself, however, died less than a year later, on 27 July 1519.

had entered the Medici court as a youth, and, tradition has it, gained the regard of Marsilio Ficino and Angelo Poliziano. After the overthrow of the Medici in 1494, he entered the monastery of S. Marco in Florence, receiving his habit from none other than Savonarola himself.<sup>12</sup> When Cardinal Giovanni de' Medici became Pope Leo X in 1513, he brought Acciaiuoli to Rome,<sup>13</sup> made him a member of his papal *famiglia*, saw to his becoming a professor of humanities at the University of Rome ("La Sapienza"),<sup>14</sup> and installed him, as Quétif and Echard put it, "in oratorio S. Silvestro Romae . . . cum honorario stipendio."<sup>15</sup> We have letters of Acciaiuoli dated from S. Silvestro; e.g., "in sancto Sylvestro in Caballis, Rome, die XXIII Julii MDXIII"<sup>16</sup> and "Romae, in Sancto Silvestro, die XVII Octobris 1513."<sup>17</sup> But the decisive proof is that the hand of Anonymus in BnF, lat. 3395 and that in signed autographs of Acciaiuoli are identical. If one compares the autograph letter reproduced here (Figure 8.1),

<sup>12</sup> From 1495 to 1508, he acted as the custodian of the Medici library deposited at the time in S. Marco; see Enea Piccolomini, "Delle condizioni e delle vicende della Libreria Medicea privata dal 1494 al 1508," *Archivio storico italiano*, ser. 3, 19 (1874), 101–29, 254–81; 20 (1875), 51–94; at 19: 268, doc. XVI, and 20: 80–81; E. B. Fryde, *Humanism and Renaissance Historiography* (London, 1983), 208–11; and *idem*, *Greek Manuscripts in the Private Library of the Medici, 1469–1510* (2 vols.; Aberystwyth, 1996), *ad indicem*.

<sup>13</sup> See William Roscoe, *The Life and Pontificate of Leo the Tenth*, 4th ed. (2 vols.; London, 1846), II, 357–58, and Acciaiuoli's ode to Leo, in *ibid.*, II, 620–23, praising the pope and calling on him to beautify the Quirinale, where, of course, S. Silvestro stood.

<sup>14</sup> According to Filippo Maria Renazzi, *Storia dell'Università di Roma* (4 vols.; Rome, 1803–06; reprint, Bologna, 1971), II, 75: "Alla cattedra di Lettere umane per la morte di Donato [Poli of Florence] vacata surrogò Leone Fr. Zenobi Acciajoli. . . ." See also Redigonda, "Acciaiuoli, Zanobi," 94. This appointment must have occurred after 1514. Only one *rotulo* of professors of the Sapienza is known from this period, that of 1514, and "Donatus" is listed as teaching "diebus festis, de mane" for a salary of 130 ducats, but Acciaiuoli is not found; see Emmanuele Conte, *I maestri della Sapienza di Roma dal 1514 al 1787: I rotuli e altre fonti* (2 vols.; Rome, 1991), I, 5.

<sup>15</sup> Quétif and Echard, *Scriptores Ordinis Praedicatorum*, I, 45. Acciaiuoli wrote in the preface to Leo X for his translation of Theodoretus that Leo "[me, *scil.*, Acciaiuoli] S. Silvestri Oratorio collocasti ad honestam studiorum quietem humanissime collocasti" (quoted by Mazzuchelli, *Scrittori*, I.1, 51, n. 8).

<sup>16</sup> See Figure 8.1: autograph in Florence, Archivio di Stato, Carte Stroziane, ser. I, 137, fol. 282r–v (old numeration, 293r–v), to Filippo Strozzi, published in *Epistolario di fra Vincenzo Mainardi da San Gimignano domenicano, 1481–1527*, ed. Armando F. Verde and Elettra Giaconi (2 vols.; Pistoia, 1992 = *Memorie domenicane*, n. s., 23), II, 446–47. This edition contains other letters of Acciaiuoli; see II, 113–17, 121–24, 136–37, 446–47, 449–50.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, II, 137, no. 166.

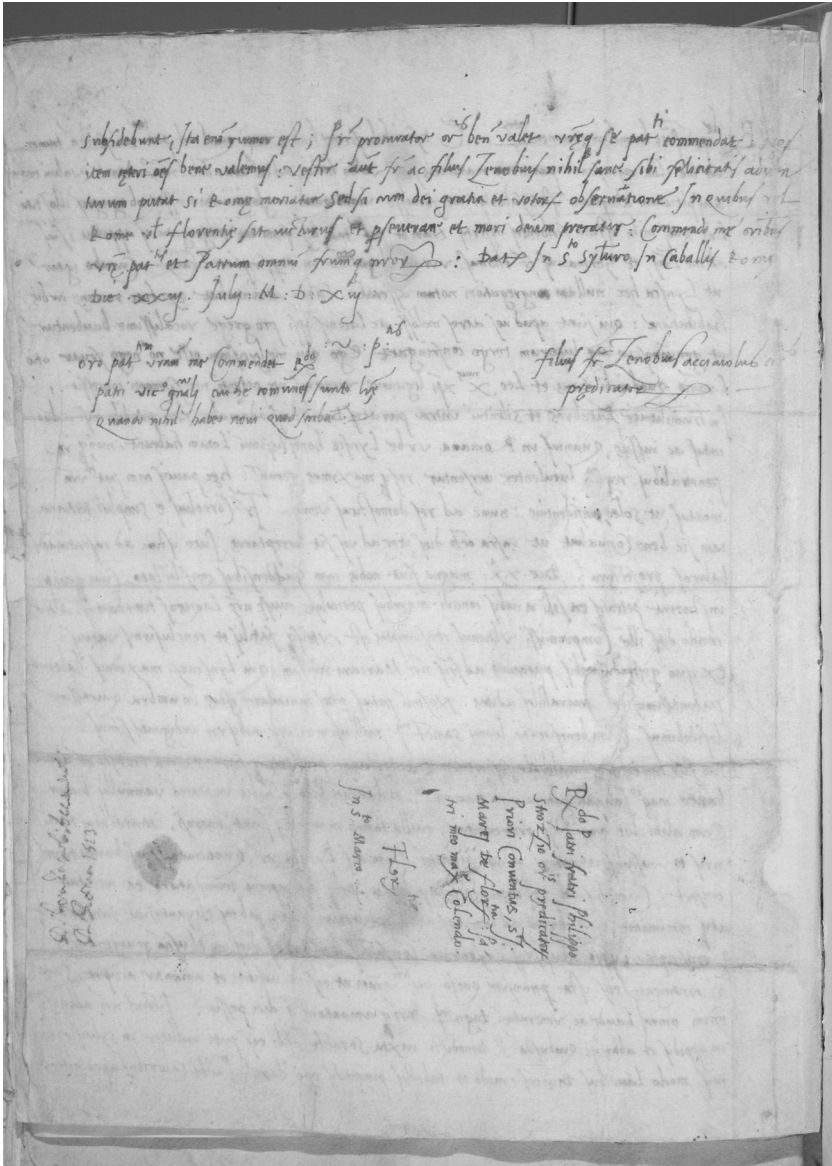


Figure 8.1. Autograph letter of Zanobi Acciaiuoli to Filippo Strozzi, Florence, Archivio di Stato, Carte Stroziane, ser. I, 137, fol. 282v (old numeration, 293v). The letter begins on fol. 282r/293r. See note 16 above.

the autograph letter reproduced in Verde-Giaconi,<sup>18</sup> and the plates in Bertòla's edition of the Vatican's loan registers,<sup>19</sup> with the plates of BnF, lat. 3395 at the end of de la Cruz Palma's edition of the *Dialogus*,<sup>20</sup> one will see that not only is the general aspect of the hand in all the reproductions the same, namely, a rather regular and clear humanist cursive, but also so are specific letter forms, such as the upper case D, N, and P, as well as the lower case G and S. Acciaiuoli is Anonymus.

Where Acciaiuoli found his Greek exemplar I have no idea. It was never part of the Vatican Library. The coeval inventories, including the "Acciaiuoli inventory" of 1518, never mention it.<sup>21</sup> But concerning what happened to the autographs we are much better informed. From an analysis of BnF, lat. 3395,<sup>22</sup> it seems probable that Acciaiuoli never completed his fine copy, stopping about four-fifths of the way through. He wrote the colophon reported by Crusius not in the fine copy but at the end of his draft version. So, Acciaiuoli completed the draft version on the night of 12 July 1518 (a Monday). But soon after, upon the death of Filippo Beroaldo, the Younger, on 30 August 1518, he suddenly found himself the head of the Vatican Library. He must have temporarily put aside for later refinement his translation of Amiroutzes. Unfortunately, he himself died less than 11 months later on 27 July 1519. Cardinal Niccolò Ridolfi, the nephew of Pope Leo X, acquired these autographs of Acciaiuoli, and upon his death in 1550, they, along with the rest of his celebrated collection of manuscripts, passed into the possession of Piero Strozzi, an enemy of Cosimo I de' Medici then living in France, and, after the death of Piero Strozzi in Thionville in 1558,

<sup>18</sup> See *ibid.*, II, facing p. 177, which reproduces Carte Stroziane, I, 137, fol. 292r (old numeration; in the most recent numeration this is fol. 276 bis II r).

<sup>19</sup> Maria Bertòla, *I due primi registri di prestito della Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana. Codici Latini Vaticani 3964, 3966* (Vatican City, 1942). The plates for Vat. Lat. 3966, fols. 119r–v, provide a substantial sample of Acciaiuoli's hand; but see also the plates for Vat. Lat. 3964, fols. 35v and 43r, as well as Vat. Lat. 3966, fols. 31r and 49v.

<sup>20</sup> There are seven plates in all at the end of Jorge Ameruzes de Trebisonda, *El Diálogo*, ed. de la Cruz Palma.

<sup>21</sup> See Robert Devreesse, *Le fonds grec de la Bibliothèque Vaticane des origines à Paul V* (Vatican City, 1965), 185–263, for the Acciaiuoli inventory of 1518 of Greek manuscripts and the inventory written by a certain John (Severos, Devreesse tentatively suggests) in Greek for Acciaiuoli's successor as prefect of the library, Jerome Aleander.

<sup>22</sup> See Appendix 1 below.

into the possession of another Medici, Catherine de' Medici, the wife of King Henry II of France and mother of the then-reigning King Charles IX of France.<sup>23</sup> At Catherine's death in 1589, her books passed into the royal library, where they have since remained.

The first editors of Acciaiuoli's translation of the *Dialogus* made two major mistakes. First, they took at face value the assertion in the modern catalogue of the Latin manuscripts of the Bibliothèque nationale de France that Crusius' report of the colophon referred to "Rome, oratoire des Théatins, Montecavallo."<sup>24</sup> The Theatines did make S. Silvestro their church, but not before the Dominicans gave it up in the early 1540s.<sup>25</sup> The Theatines were not formed into an order until 1524 in any case. So, not seeing that the translator at S. Silvestro in 1518 had to be a Dominican was to miss a valuable clue in identifying Acciaiuoli. The second mistake was not to check Paul Oskar Kristeller's *Iter Italicum*, for a quick glance at the index would have turned up three manuscripts, all of which preserve the *Dialogus* whole, including the last section that has dropped out of BnF, lat. 3395.<sup>26</sup> The editor of the draft version of the translation, Óscar de la Cruz Palma,<sup>27</sup> corrected readings of Argyriou and Lagarrigue, but did not otherwise advance beyond them.

Since Acciaiuoli never finished the fine copy of the *Dialogus* in BnF, lat. 3395 and since the draft copy in the same manuscript is in a condition such that only Acciaiuoli himself could have extracted a clean text from it, the three Vatican manuscripts are independent of BnF, lat. 3395. One of the three, Vat. Lat. 3469, was prepared for a co-founder of the Theatines and future pope, Cardinal Gian Pietro Carafa (cardinal, 1536–55; Pope Paul IV, 1555–59). An analysis of it suggests that he or a member of his entourage found a now

<sup>23</sup> See Appendix 1 below, and especially Roberto Ridolfi, "La biblioteca del cardinale Niccolò Ridolfi (1501–1550)," *La Bibliofilia*, 31 (1929), 173–93, at 184–87.

<sup>24</sup> Argyriou and Lagarrigue, "Georges Amiroutzès et son «Dialogue sur la foi»," at 49. See Bibliothèque nationale de France, *Catalogue général des manuscrits latins* (7 vols. to date; Paris, 1939–), V, 341–42, at 342.

<sup>25</sup> The exact date is uncertain; see Zucchi, *Roma domenicana*, II, 208.

<sup>26</sup> See Appendix 2 below for a description of these manuscripts. See Paul O. Kristeller, *Iter Italicum: A Finding List of Uncatalogued or Incompletely Catalogued Humanistic Manuscripts of the Renaissance in Italian and Other Libraries*, with separate index fascicles to vols. 3, 5, and 6, in addition to the cumulative index that constitutes vol. 7 (7 vols. in 10; Leiden, 1963–97), II, 320 for Vat. Lat. 3469; 335 for Vat. Lat. 5619; and 345 for Vat. Lat. 8603.

<sup>27</sup> See note 1 above.

lost autograph copy of the complete dialogue (**b**), probably at S. Silvestro itself.<sup>28</sup> It stands to reason that Acciaiuoli would have made a complete clean copy for himself soon after completing the translation on 18 July 1518. The existence of **b** makes it more understandable why Acciaiuoli could leave off making the clean copy in BnF, lat. 3395 when the press of other work, probably his appointment as head of the Vatican Library, forced him to put it aside. A complete, clean copy of the translation already existed. It was **b**, which served as the archetype for the extant Vatican copies.

Vat. Lat. 3469 offers us a nearly perfect text of the section missing from BnF, lat. 3395. The other two Vatican manuscripts, Vat. Lat. 5619 and Vat. Lat. 8603, also date from sixteenth-century Rome. As copies, however, they are perfectly awful. They teem with errors. The best way to explain such textual degradation is to suppose a certain amount of retranscription before the text was ever copied for these two manuscripts. So Acciaiuoli's translation of the *Dialogus* enjoyed a not insignificant circulation in sixteenth-century Rome. Scholars were clearly interested in it. If the identity of the translator were known, I am sure that Acciaiuoli's high repute would have prompted someone in Rome to prepare a printed edition either as an isolated work or as part of a collection of texts. But Acciaiuoli prepared **b** for himself and did not identify himself in it as the translator. As far as Carafa and everyone else in sixteenth-century Rome was concerned, the *Dialogus* was an anonymous translation.

I reserve for another time a discussion of Amiroutzes and his *Dialogus*. Analyzing in isolation the closing section edited below would not be very fruitful. But we should consider what the recovery of the missing section of the *Dialogus* adds to our knowledge. Crusius' précis of this last section, which Argyriou and Lagarrigue as well as de la Cruz Palma quote, does give in the space of a half a page the gist of the argument. What, of necessity, it does not include are the details of the argument. So now for the first time we can follow Amiroutzes' argument in detail.

At the point where the text stops in BnF, lat. 3395, in response to Mehmed's assertion of the unknowability of God and his slurs against the Christian Trinity, Amiroutzes was arguing that we can know certain definite things about God. Crusius reduced the remain-

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<sup>28</sup> See the introduction in Appendix 2 below.

der of the argument to: "Bonitas autem et id genus alia ab intellectu non prodeunt, sed ipsa sunt intellectus." From this you would never know that Amiroutzes wrapped up this segment of the *Dialogus* by arguing that, since God is the cause of all, we know Him through His creatures; or that, even though he cited Aristotle, the main brunt of his argument was Platonic. Amiroutzes insisted that the ideas and exemplars of things are in God as their cause. Creatures therefore are *imagines* of their creator. Their perfections analogically reflect God's perfections. He concluded that from His *imagines* we know God to be Good, Being, True, and One in an absolute sense (*simpliciter*), i.e., though Amiroutzes did not say it, that God is the absolute realization of the Scholastic transcendentals. Amiroutzes had earlier cited Aristotle on God being *mens optima*. Since God is Mind (*intellectus*), Amiroutzes asserted that God is also Word and Will. Therefore, though these are three things, God remains one in substance. In other words, Amiroutzes had given a short course in natural theology.

Mehmed reacted by acknowledging Amiroutzes' use of a *gravis oratio* to prove, *quam maxime fieri potest*, what is in fact a *positio falsissima*. Mehmed is also presented as remarking that Aristotle attests to *fabulosa puerilisque opinio* trumping *cognitio veritatis*. Despite the embellishment of a reference to Aristotle, this sour comment might very well reflect Mehmed's conversation.

The final segment of the *Dialogus* deals with the resurrection of the dead. In Crusius' précis one learns nothing of Amiroutzes' impassioned proclamation of his devotion to truth as the basis for his devotion to Christianity (§ XLIII.1). Nor would one know anything of Amiroutzes' physical argument, namely, that the reason why vegetative and sensitive life made no sense after resurrection was that with resurrection we would achieve *stasis*; there would be no growth, no decrease, no generation, and no degeneration, for the sake of which, as Aristotle explained, the physical world is in motion. At the resurrection, the heavens will cease to move. But, Mehmed then objected, the resurrection of the body would be superfluous since the body itself would be superfluous. Mehmed's objection [§ XLIV.1] is, in fact, lengthy—and quite Aristotelian, stressing that nature does not act in vain. Oddly enough, in view of the fact that he himself was a theologian, Crusius did not allude to Amiroutzes' discussion of hell. Nor does he bring out Amiroutzes' argument that in an infinite future, generation must cease or absurdity ensues; nor for that matter Amiroutzes' strenuous Aristotelianism, in which the resurrected

souls are compared to Aristotelian celestial bodies, and his attack on Plato's notion of human beings as essentially souls. Finally, Crusius passed over Amiroutzes' attack on Epicureanism, which can only be a veiled assault on the materialistic Islamic notion of paradise, and Amiroutzes' closing point that though the doctrine of the resurrection of the body is a Christian dogma and not a philosophical tenet, he had tried to show purely on the basis of philosophical reasoning what would be the consequences of such a doctrine once it is accepted as true.

In sum, as one would have expected, Crusius' précis is a very inadequate substitute for the actual text of Acciaiuoli's translation of the final 20% of the *Dialogus*.



## APPENDIX 1

*Manuscript lat. 3395 of the Bibliothèque nationale de France*

A good description already exists in the modern *Catalogue général des manuscrits latins* of the Bibliothèque nationale de France, V, 341–42. My purpose here is to fill in some details, and correct the description on a few points. I have not seen the manuscript *in situ*, but have relied on a microfilm. BnF lat. 3395 (henceforth = **P**) is a sixteenth-century paper miscellany of different fascicles and hands (five hands altogether, three in text **1**, a fourth in text **2**, and a fifth, Acciaiuoli's, in texts **3** and **4**). The *Catalogue général* reports **P** as being 290 × 215 mm. in dimension. It consists of one numbered front flyleaf (= fol. I), 330 numbered pages, and a rear flyleaf.

**1.** The first text, on pp. 1–40, is Martin Luther's *Resolutio Luteriana super propositionem suam XIII de potestate papae*, with precisely the title as given by Luther because **P** is a manuscript copy of the first edition of this work, printed at Wittenberg in June 1519. **P** duplicates Luther's preface to this work, which was replaced with a different preface in subsequent editions; see Martin Luther, *Werke. Kritische Gesamtausgabe* ["Weimar Edition"], II (Weimar, 1884; reprint, Weimar-Graz, 1966), 180–240. Three hands wrote this text: (1) a humanist cursive pp. 1–20, 22.15–32.8; (2) a bastarda, pp. 21–22.15 (3) a humanist cursive, pp. 32.8 up–40. Hand (3) was also responsible for corrections and marginalia throughout. The transcription was obviously done with some urgency, with the work divided between three persons.

**2.** The second text, on pp. 43–134 (pp. 41–42 are blank), is an anonymous treatise addressed to Pope Leo X (*inc.* Beatissime pater, postquam, ut decet iussit sanctitas tua ut in communi causa omnes laboraremus, laboravi et ego quoque, licet omnium minimus. *des.* quod proprium solet esse ecclesiae, ut tunc sevicat cum leditur, tunc intelligat cum arguitur, tunc segura sit cum superata videtur.) justifying at the beginning and end the use of the secular (imperial) arm against Luther on the basis of a plethora of canonical and historical citations and in the middle refuting in detail Luther's arguments in the *Resolutio*. A new, elegant humanist cursive hand wrote the whole text. I would think that the author of text **2** was the first owner of text **1** and that he is the third hand in text **1**. This same hand corrected **2** at some points (pp. 55, 67, 68, 79, etc.). The

*Catalogue général* dates this text to late 1520 on the grounds that it refers to Luther burning the papal bull of condemnation (on 10 December 1520) but not the Diet of Worms, which began on 22 January 1521. Late December 1520 to early January 1521 would seem to be the right date; but it should be noted that the text refers to Luther burning canon law books (pp. 60–61, 125), which is accurate. The author may not have known of Luther's burning of the papal bull at the same time. Pp. 135–42 are blank save for the notice on p. 142: "Informatio pro concilio contra lutheranos//N° 29." The title (not in the hand of the treatise) does not accurately reflect the anonymous treatise, but p. 142 seems to have been meant to serve as the front cover of the fascicle but got bound to the end of it instead.

**3.** The third text, on pp. 143–265, is the autograph fine copy of Acciaiuoli's translation of Amiroutzes' *Dialogus*. P. 265 is a recto page and the text on this page is complete (*des. quidnam ipse secundum se sit* = ed. de la Cruz Palma, p. 184.13). So, the text is defective because Acciaiuoli simply stopped copying at p. 265 and did not continue the text on the verso (p. 266). Pp. 266–68 are blank.

**4.** The fourth text, on pp. 269–330, is the autograph working draft of Acciaiuoli's translation, ending defectively at last word on the last line of the verso side of a folio (= p. 330) with the words "sed divina subiecta nec bona per se[-ipsam]" (= ed. de la Cruz Palma, p. 182.2).

According to *Catalogue général*, texts **1** and **2** share the same watermark: *Agneau pascal*, similar to Briquet no. 47 sq. (the closest plausible date is no. 49 attested for Florence in 1511 and Treviso in 1514); texts **3** and **4** each have their own distinct watermarks; according to *Catalogue général*, the watermark of **3** is similar to Briquet no. 7854 sq.: *huchet* (no. 7855 is attested for Rome, 1513); the watermark of **4** is said to be similar to Briquet 13884 sq.: *sirène* (no. 13886 is attested at early as Florence 1509 and as late as Viterbo 1515; no. 13887 as early as Trevizo 1514 and Naples as late as 1521).

**P** preserves multiple numerations beyond the most recent sequential numeration by page number for the whole manuscript. Text **1** has no numeration besides the most recent one. Text **2** has two older numerations, one that marks the first folio as fol. 33 (= pp. 43–44) and runs to fol. 78 (= pp. 133–34), jumping from 39 to 41 in the count but also omitting in the count fol. 64a (= pp. 105–6), and thus coming out with the correct terminal number; and another that

marks the first folio as 1 (= pp. 43–44) and runs to fol. 46 (= pp. 133–34), switching to Roman numerals at fol. 10. So text **2** was once a separate fascicle, and when bound with **1**, some other text intervened between it and **1** because that is the only way to explain why the first folio of **2** is numbered "33" when **1** only has 20 folios. The hypothesized missing text had to be between **1** and **2** because if it were at the start, then today **1** would be marked as fols. 12–31. Since **1** and **2** share the same watermark and are closely linked by content, it is reasonable to suppose that this hypothesized lost text also had some affiliation with **1** and **2**. Texts **3** and **4** continue the folio numeration found in text **2**, mistakenly counting two folios in succession as fol. 111. So text **3** begins with fol. 83r and ends with fol. 144r, and text **4** begins with fol. 146r and ends with fol. 176v.

**P** also preserves a series of old shelfmarks. Fol. Ir and p. 1 bear the old royal library number 5690, as in the 1682 catalogue of Nicolas Clément (see Omont, *Anciens inventaires*, III, 465). Fol. Ir also carries other numbers. The first is "N<sup>o</sup>. n [*deletum p*°] 28." This number corresponds to an entry in the inventory drawn up by Matthew Devaris of the manuscripts of Cardinal Niccolò Ridolfi that came from Giles of Viterbo (edited first by Montfaucon, *Bibliotheca Bibliothecarum*, II, 778–82; and then by Astruc-Monfrin from MS BnF grec 3074, fols. 74v–79v; see also Ridolfi, "Biblioteca"): "N<sup>o</sup> 28. Resolutio lutherana super propositionem suam. Item de potestate Pape in s. in un quinterno de carte 20 in foglio comune." Text **1** in fact consists of 20 folios. The "N<sup>o</sup>. 28" seems to have been written at the time that the inventory in grec 3074 was drawn up. I am not sure what to make of "n (*deletum p*°)." Perhaps Devaris initially thought to write "n primo" (i.e., "N<sup>o</sup> 1") before realizing his error; then he cancelled the "p" but left the "n" because it did not create any confusion. The next number on fol. Ir is "C. 20." This is obviously a shelfmark rather than an inventory number, either of Ridolfi's library or of the library of Catherine de' Medici, who inherited Ridolfi's manuscripts. Finally, fol. Ir has the number "48." It is unclear to what this number refers.

P. 43 bears two old shelfmarks "N<sup>o</sup>. 6 ζ'" (not "6.5," as reported by the *Catalogue général*), which is cancelled, and "C. 46," which is not. Because of the Greek "6" the first shelfmark probably reflects the fascicle's position in the Ridolfi's library under Devaris. The second number shows text **2** as belonging to the same library as text **1**. P. 142, the last blank page after text **2** has the notice: "Informatio

pro concilio contra lutheranos. N° 29,” which corresponds perfectly with the entry in the Ridolfi inventory by Devaris listing manuscript from Giles of Viterbo: “N° 29. Informatio pro concilio contra Luteranos in un quinterno de carte 46 in s. in papiro in foglio comune.” As we have seen, text **2** is contained in 46 numbered folios.

P. 143 has the inventory number “N° 95” in both the top and bottom margins. According to the *Catalogue général*, Ridolfi’s catalog, at fol. 86v of BnF grec 3074, lists” “n° 96 [sic] Georgii Ameruzae de fide in Christum dialogus cui titulus est Philosophus vel de fide.” In the inventory of the library of Catherine de’ Medici this text had the serial number 645 (BnF lat. 17917, p. 46; according to *ibid.*; Omont, *Anciens inventaire*, I, 447, gives it the serial number 3833 in his edition of the “Inventaire de la bibliothèque de la royne [Catherine de Médici]”).

So all four texts in **P** come from the Ridolfi collection, the first two having previously belonged to Giles of Viterbo (d. 1532). How Giles acquired them is anyone’s guess, but they doubtlessly belonged to the author of text **2**, who was a member of the papal court in Rome under Pope Leo X. Ridolfi acquired texts **3** and **4** after Acciaiuoli’s death in 1519. All four texts seem to have been bound together for the first time after they entered the French royal collection upon the death of Catherine de’ Medici in 1589. In this state, with the old shelfmark lat. 5690, **P** contained immediately after text **1** a now lost text probably related to texts **1** and **2**. In this state, text **4** still had its last fascicle, which Crusius saw in the 1720s. The colophon Crusius reports in his 1745 synopsis must have been at the end of the draft copy of the translation, i.e., of text **4**, rather than in the fine copy, text **3**, since **4** clearly has lost a fascicle at the end while **3** shows no sign of having lost anything. Subsequently, **P** lost towards its beginning a fascicle that I hypothesize contained a text connected with **1** and **2**, and, at the end, the last fascicle of **4**. Perhaps the losses occurred when Crusius arranged for the *Dialogus* to be copied for him (see the end of the quotation in n. 4 of the article). In any case, the rebound **P**, with its present shelfmark of lat. 3395, seems to contain today only the texts listed in the 1739–44 *Catalogus . . . Bibliothecae Regiae*.

BIBL.: *Catalogus Codicum Manuscriptorum Bibliothecae Regiae. Pars Tertia* (4 vols.; Paris, 1739–44), III, 414; Bernard Montfaucon, *Bibliotheca Bibliothecarum Manuscriptorum Nova* (2 vols.; Paris, 1739); Henri Omont, *Anciens inventaires et catalogues de la Bibliothèque nationale* (5 vols.; Paris,

1908–21); C.-M. Briquet, *Les filigranes. Dictionnaire historique des marques du papier dès leur apparition vers 1282 jusqu'en 1600*, 2nd ed. (4 vols.; Leipzig, 1923); Bibliothèque nationale de France, *Catalogue général des manuscrits latins* (7 vols. to date; Paris, 1939–), V, 341–42; Charles Astruc and Jacques Monfrin, "Livres latins et hébreux du cardinal Gilles de Viterbe," *Bibliothèque d'Humanisme et Renaissance*, 23 (1961), 551–54; and in general, though not for this particular manuscript, Roberto Ridolfi, "La biblioteca del cardinale Niccolò Ridolfi (1501–1550)," *La Bibliofilia*, 31 (1929), 173–93.

## APPENDIX 2

*The "Lost" Final Part of Zanobi Acciaiuoli's Translation of  
George Amiroutzes' Dialogus**Sigla*

**P<sup>p</sup>** = Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Lat. 3395, fols. 83r–144r.

**P<sup>r</sup>** = Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Lat. 3395, fols. 146r–76v.

**V** = Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Vat. Lat. 3469, fols. 1r–87v.

**X** = Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Vat. Lat. 5619, fols. 154r–214v.

**Z** = Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Vat. Lat. 8603, fols. 43r–114v.

**P<sup>p</sup>** preserves a bit more of Acciaiuoli's translation of Amiroutzes' *Dialogus* than does **P<sup>r</sup>**. See Appendix 1 above for a description. Of the three Vatican manuscripts (see the description of each below), all first listed by Kristeller, the only one that matters for establishing the text is **V**. Not only does **V** offer a nearly flawless text, but also its marginalia could only derive from Acciaiuoli himself (see nn. 20, 74, 89, 103, 104, and 124 in the text below). The cardinalitial arms of Gian Pietro Carafa date **V** between 1536, when Carafa became a cardinal, and 1555, when he became Pope Paul IV. Since Carafa was one of the co-founders of the Theatines and since the Theatines took over S. Silvestro a Montecavallo from the Dominicans in the early 1540s (see n. 24 of the article above), it is not improbable that Carafa or a member of his *famiglia* found a copy of Acciaiuoli's translation at S. Silvestro. This copy could not have been **P<sup>p</sup>** since **P<sup>p</sup>** never went beyond the point it ends today (see the analysis in Appendix 1 above). Nor could the copy have been **P<sup>r</sup>** since it is quite implausible to expect a scribe to have produced a virtually flawless copy of such a messy, difficult manuscript as **P<sup>r</sup>**. Hence, whether at S. Silvestro or elsewhere in Rome, there must have been a third autograph manuscript (= **b**) of Acciaiuoli's translation which Carafa's scribe copied. I suspect that this third autograph was intermediate in time between the messy draft, **P<sup>r</sup>**, and the fine copy, **P<sup>p</sup>**, since it makes no sense to suppose that Acciaiuoli left off copying **P<sup>p</sup>** in order to prepare yet another copy. Rather, after completing **P<sup>r</sup>**, Acciaiuoli probably prepared **b** as a good copy of the translation for himself, with occasional marginal notes, and then started on

**P<sup>p</sup>** as a presentation copy or for some other purpose. Since Acciaiuoli prepared **b** for himself, it carried no notice of him as the translator; and since it was only a copy, it did not call forth a colophon dating it as did **P<sup>r</sup>** when Acciaiuoli finished the translation. Consequently, neither Carafa nor anyone in his *famiglia* knew that Acciaiuoli was the translator. For them it was just an interesting text by an anonymous translator.

Collation proves that **X** derives from **Z**, containing all the errors of the latter and adding new ones. I have included in the annotation a collation of only the first two folios of **X** (fols. 206r–v) to demonstrate this fact. Unfortunately, **Z** in its turn preserves a wretchedly poor text of the translation. I included the collation of all of **Z** for the text below only because the collation might have value in tracing lines of transmission if any other copies of the translation turn up, but in terms of establishing the text **Z** is useless save in proving that some errors seem to go back to **b** (see nn. 63 and 128 below).

**X** and **Z** do have historical value, however. Whereas **V** contains exclusively the *Dialogus*, suggesting that it was conceived as a replica of **b**, its exemplar, **X** and **Z** combine the *Dialogus* in miscellanies of related texts. The *Dialogus* clearly circulated among scholars in sixteenth-century Rome. And given the poor state of the text of **X** and **Z**, we can safely suppose that there were intervening copies between them and **b** and/or **V** that no longer exist or have not yet been identified.

In editing the text below I have modernized the punctuation and corrected obvious errors but otherwise faithfully reproduced the text of **V**. I have also imposed on the text the numbering system of de la Cruz Palma. Hence, I have continued his sequence of Roman numerals marking each instance an interlocutor speaks. He also assigned a sequential Arabic number to each paragraph under every Roman number. So, after giving the title and incipit of the *Dialogus*, my text skips to the missing last section and re-begins where his text ends, namely, at **XLI** [5], and continues on from there.

I have not tried to document allusions and unacknowledged paraphrases, though some are obvious. I only documented explicit references, specifically, eight to Aristotle and one to Plato (see nn. 40, 50, 75, 105, 108, 119, 134, and 144 below).

*Descriptions*

**V** = BAV, Vat. Lat. 3469. Chart., s. XVI, 225 × 117 mm., I + 93 + II fols. One humanist cursive hand. Kristeller, *Iter Italicum*, II, 320.

Fol. Ir: Two pasted labels: 1) “Exp.° in Ester./131.” 2) “GEORGII AMERVZAE/DIALOGVS DE FIDE. etc.”

Fol. Iv: The *ex-libris* “Ant<sup>ii</sup>: Car: Cara<sup>fac</sup> Munus ex Bibliotheca<sup>rii</sup> Test<sup>o</sup>” with Carafa’s cardinalitial arms in red ink (seven alternating red and white bands beginning and ending with a red band) between *ex* and *Bibliothecarii*.

Fols. 1r–87v (original numeration is pp. 1–158): George Ameruztes, *Dialogus de Fide Christi*. The section *Asserimus igitur quidnam* begins on fol. 74r, line 13.

Fols. 88r–93r: “Tabula insigniorum ex ordine alphabaeti in hisce disputationibus contentorum”. The first item is *Accidens descriptio* with a reference to p. 97; the last is *Volitio* with references to pp. 120, 121, 122, 123, 124.

**X** = BAV, Vat. Lat. 5619. Chart., s. XVI, 320 × 215 mm., I + 215 fols., one hum. cursive hand, with blank folios between texts; fol. 215 is blank. Kristeller, *Iter Italicum*, II, 335.

Fol. Ir: Table of contents.

Fols. 1r–62v: Leodrisius Cribellus, *De expeditione Pii II adversus Turcas*.

Fols. 65r–90r: *Ordo ecclesiasticus Romane Ecclesie. Qualiter misa celebratur a summo pontifice*.

Fols. 91r–113v: Pius II, *Epigrammata*.

Fols. 114r–37r: *Compendium Concilii Basiliensis*.

Fols. 137v–52v: Excerpt from Pius II’s *Commentarii* dealing with the Council of Basel, with the title *De Potestate Papae et Concilii, inc. Post conventum Norembergensis in quo nihil agi potuit . . . des. ad pacem hihl debuisse omnino agere quo suam impedirent legationem*.

Fols. 154r–214v: Georgii Ameruza, *Magni Trapezuntis Logothetae Dialogus de Fide in Christum Habitus cum Rege Turcarum. Titulus Dialogi Philosophus vel De Fide. Interlocutores. Rex Turcarum. Philosophus*. (Fols. 154r–55v: *Proemium Ameruzae*; 156r–214v: *Dialogus*). The section *Asserimus igitur quidnam* begins on fol. 206r, line 10. The MS lacks marginalia.



**Z** = BAV, Vat. Lat. 8603. Chart. s. XVI, 210 × 142 mm., I + 114 (modern numeration + 114a) + II fols. Blank folios between texts. fols. 3r–41r, 62r–114v are covered by a transparent sheet to preserve the folios from the corrosive ink of the text. Two hands: a humanist cursive on fols. 3r–44r, 54r–61r, and a semi-gothic cursive on fols. 45r–53v, 62r–114v. Kristeller, *Iter Italicum*, II, 345.

Fol. 1r: Table of contents.

Fols. 2r–26r: Compendium Concilii Basiliensis (fol. 2r: title; 2v: blank; 3r–41r: Compendium).

Fols. 26v–41r: Extract from Pius II's *Commentarii*, with the title *De Potestate Papae et Concilii* and the same *incipit/desinit* as **X**.

Fol. 42r (coeval humanistic current hand): Index of 9 lines listing cardinals and the fol. number is which they are mentioned in the *Compendium*.

Fols. 43r–114v: George Amiruztes, *Dialogus de Fide in Christum* (fol. 43r: just the title in capital letters "Georgii Ameruzae Magni Trapezuntis Logothete Dialogus de Fide in Christum"; 43v: blank; 44r: (title again in capital letters) "Georgii Ameruzae Magni Trapezuntis Logothetae Dialogus de Fide in Christum habitus cum rege Turcarum. Titulus dialogi Philosophus, vel De Fide. Interlocutores. Rex Turcarum. Philosophus"; 44v: blank; 45r–46v: Proemium Ameruzae (title in Roman capital letters); 47r–114v: *Dialogus*. The section *Asserimus igitur quidnam* begins on fol. 105v, line 3. No marginalia save for corrections (marginal and interlinear) and an occasional marginal comment in a humanist cursive hand.

Fol. 114a: a narrow strip of paper (5 mm.) inserted between fol. 114 and rear flyleaf I which was once the bottom of seemingly a full size sheet; the recto and verso each contain the final seven lines of the page from a Latin text in a humanist current hand.

/V 1r/

Georgii Ameruzae, Magni Trapezuntis Logothetae, Dialogus De  
Fide In Christum Habitus Cum Rege Turcarum.  
Titulus Dialogi: Philosophus Vel De Fide.  
Prooemium.

[I] [1] Mihi quidem nulla amplius relicta occasio videbatur . . .

/P<sup>p</sup> 144r/V 74r/X 206r/Z 105r/. . . [XLI] [5] (PHILOSOPHUS)  
Asserimus igitur quidnam deus secundum seipsum sit et quam<sup>1</sup>  
ratione sit incogitabile prorsus esse ac ineffabile, ipsi vero duntaxat  
deo cognitum esse quidnam ipse secundum se sit. /P<sup>p</sup> 144v/ Quod  
autem in nobis est, quatenus est entium /V 74v/ causa et princi-  
pium, scimus deum et nuncupamus,<sup>2</sup> utque a nobis cognoscatur aliquo  
modo, scimus eum hasce multas<sup>3</sup> ac differentes rerum species in  
lucem edere. Neque enim necessariae utilitatis causa tam multae  
species editae ab eo sunt. Neque enim hoc habent editionis suae  
principium quod<sup>4</sup> materia potestate sit. Haec nec<sup>5</sup> omnia quae gignuntur,  
sicut nonnulli opinati sunt, sed, ut mundus quam maxime  
possit, perfectam habeas<sup>6</sup> imaginis rationem, neve homo, huius mundi  
spectator, careat imaginibus, sed earum potius abundet copia, unde<sup>7</sup>  
ad divinum principium conscendat. Quando igitur deus est entium  
causa et principium, necesse est cuncta quae sunt ei aliquo modo  
similia esse ut eius imagines quasdam. Omne enim a quo quicquam<sup>8</sup>  
/X 206v/ producitur, nisi productionis causa sit per accidens, id  
producit quod sibi quocumque modo sit simile. Quicquid vero perfecti  
invenitur<sup>9</sup> in his quae /Z 106r/ a causa aliqua producuntur,<sup>10</sup> /V 75r/  
necesse est hoc illis ab ipsa causa proficisci. Quandoquidem totum  
hoc, quod ea sunt, id<sup>11</sup> est, profectum (perfectio autem ab ipso est)

<sup>1</sup> quam: qua nostra XZ.

<sup>2</sup> noncupamus V.

<sup>3</sup> hasce multas: multas hasce Z.

<sup>4</sup> quo XZ.

<sup>5</sup> nec om. XZ.

<sup>6</sup> habere XZ.

<sup>7</sup> inde XZ.

<sup>8</sup> a quoconque X.

<sup>9</sup> invenitur om. V.

<sup>10</sup> aliqua producuntur: producuntur aliqua X.

<sup>11</sup> inde X.

esse, oportet igitur a causa illis advenire perfectionem. Neque vero haec illis adesse potest perfectio aut casu aliquo aut propria ulla vi cum ab illo ipsa sint.<sup>12</sup> Reliquum est igitur ut perfectio sit a causa.<sup>13</sup> Quod autem in effectibus<sup>14</sup> est, a causa profectum<sup>15</sup> necesse est<sup>16</sup> ut in ipsa primum sit causa, non tantum eodem penitus modo, nisi forte utraque sint univoca; sed in causa quidem principali quaedam sint<sup>17</sup> exemplarique ratione; in his vero quae sunt a causa sint, analogice atque summis. Quando itaque rerum omnium causa<sup>18</sup> et principium deus est, oportet harum perfectiones<sup>19</sup> inde esse ac per se primo in causa illa existere atque in ipsa quidem esse ideas<sup>20</sup> rerum atque exempla, in illis autem quae inde sunt esse imagines atque<sup>21</sup> similitudines, et in effectibus<sup>22</sup> quidem esse discretim, in prima vero causa esse unice.<sup>23</sup> Ibi enim multa non /V 75v/ sunt. At illud unum quodcumque est, divina substantia est omnia uniformiter. Nos autem multitudinem illi afferimus. Nam quae<sup>24</sup> ipsi discretim cogitamus et intelligimus propriam cuiusque rationem reddentes,<sup>25</sup> utqui unice respicere<sup>26</sup> multa non possumus,<sup>27</sup> haec de divina praedicamus substantia. Scimus tamen quod haec multa ibi sunt /Z 106v/ unice, quamquam nescimus /X 207r/ quonam modo id possit. Nullam enim<sup>28</sup> possumus invenire in iis quae sunt eiusmodi imaginem unde ad dei veniamus<sup>29</sup> comprehensionem. Non enim potest creatura aliqua capax esse cunctarum perfectionum. Nam si creatura hoc posset, illa uniformiter in causa non esset, quandoquidem oporteret ut ab essentia horum esse differret neque idem unumque esset. Ex his

<sup>12</sup> sunt *X*.

<sup>13</sup> est igitur ut perfectio sit a causa *om. XZ*.

<sup>14</sup> infectionibus *XZ*.

<sup>15</sup> profectum *XZ*.

<sup>16</sup> est *om. X*.

<sup>17</sup> sunt *XZ*.

<sup>18</sup> sint, analogice atque summis. Quando itaque rerum omnium causa *om. XZ*.

<sup>19</sup> spectiones *XZ*.

<sup>20</sup> *in marg. V*: vel species.

<sup>21</sup> ac *XZ*.

<sup>22</sup> in effectibus: infectibus *XZ*.

<sup>23</sup> unio *X*.

<sup>24</sup> Nam quae: namque *X*.

<sup>25</sup> sedentes *XZ*.

<sup>26</sup> inspicere *XZ*.

<sup>27</sup> possumus *XZ*.

<sup>28</sup> nullam enim: nullo modo *Z*.

<sup>29</sup> inveniams *Z*.

vero cunctis quae dicta sunt plane constat quicquid inest rebus perfectionis, principaliter ratione in deo esse. Iccirco itaque ipsum vocamus et bonum et ens et /V 76r/ verum taliaque id genus, ac unum quodque simpliciter quod<sup>30</sup> ipsum est, non tamen ipsum quod est.<sup>31</sup>

[6] Cum itaque mentem optimam dicimus deum esse, merito sic vocamus. Est omnino in eo verbum et voluntas. Ita igitur praedicatio deo redditur atque in ipso est. Negatio autem quam tu attulisti praedicationem hanc minime illi aufert quatenus ea est in deo, sed quatenus a nobis cognoscitur. Nam quae ipsi cognoscimus, qua talia sunt, non congruunt divinae substantiae quia noster intellectus ea sumit a sensibilibus. Quale igitur unum quodque<sup>32</sup> est quod in creaturis intelligimus, tale etiam divinae applicamus naturae. Atque ideo ineffabilis deus dicitur, /Z 107v/ incogitabilis, incomprehensibilis. Illum vero, cuius haec ipsa quae dicimus sunt imagines, deum proculdubio esse oportet. Afirmatio itaque illi congruit quatenus in eo est praedicatum, negatio item quatenus intelligitur a nobis et quatenus sumpta est a sensibilibus. Ipsa quidem prae- /V 76v/ dicati subiective compositio, duntaxat est<sup>33</sup> intellectilis, cuius est etiam multitudo. At in deo idem est subiectum quod praedicatum multitudoque in unum contrahitur. Ac de his quidem haec.<sup>34</sup>

[7] Quod autem a solis actibus deus nuncupetur, verum id quidem est. Neque tamen per<sup>35</sup> haec a deo vere tolluntur ea quae inesse illi dicuntur. Quae enim nos de divina praedicamus substantia ab operibus illius accepta sunt; sed necesse est in<sup>36</sup> his aliquid respondere quod per se deo insitum sit. Horum vero aliud quidem est species et exemplum; et hoc est ipsum quod esse dicitur; aliud autem imago illius vel simulacrum ab eo plurimum distans quod esse dicitur. Neque vero etiam primi intellectionem principii aut alterius substantiae quam ipsum sit<sup>37</sup> aut accidens esse contingit, quia videlicet divina illa mens nihil aliud intelligit praeter se ipsum. Decet enim

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<sup>30</sup> quo ῥ.

<sup>31</sup> quod est: quod quid ῥ.

<sup>32</sup> quoque ῥ.

<sup>33</sup> et ῥ.

<sup>34</sup> haecenus V.

<sup>35</sup> pro ῥ.

<sup>36</sup> in: autem ῥ.

<sup>37</sup> si ῥ.

ac necesse est ut id quod est /Z 107v/ optimum ma- /V 77r/ ximeque divinum meditetur atque intelligat neque immutetur. Tale autem solus ipse est deus. Se ipsum ergo solum intelligit si non mutatur. Quare idem est intellectus et intellectum. At intellectio est id quod intellecta res, sicut etiam sensus est id quod sensu apprehensum<sup>38</sup> est. Pari ergo modo idem est intellectio et intellecta res ipseque etiam<sup>39</sup> intellectus, quae omnia manifeste disserit Aristoteles XII libro Methaphysicorum.<sup>40</sup> Non sunt igitur alterius nec diversae substantiae intellectus eiusque intellectio; neque haec potest accidens esse, quandoquidem intellectio ipsius intellectus est vita, ut ibidem inquit philosophus. Actus siquidem est vita intellectus, intellectio vero est actus. Actus autem est per se vita intellectus optima et sempiterna. Ipsius autem<sup>41</sup> intellectus vita non est accidens. Neque igitur est<sup>42</sup> et intellectio; distinguitur autem ab eo qua intellectus quidem est per se ipsum, intellectio autem per intellectum. Hoc quidem substantiae differentiam /V 77v/ nullam facit, sed duntaxat relationis numerum. Nam si substantiae faceret differentiam, esset utique intellectus alterum /Z 108r/ a se ipso<sup>43</sup> quandoquidem ipse sui ipsius est intellectio, quae diversa res ab intellectu esse non potest. Eadem vero et de voluntate licet asserere, videlicet, oportere in deo esse voluntatem quae ab eo atque ipsius verbo distinguntur numero, eiusdem vero cum illis penitus substantiae sit.<sup>44</sup> Intellectus vero est deus, ut iam ostendimus, estque in eo verbum et voluntas. Quae tria cum sint, unius tamen numero sunt substantiae; unusque iccirco est deus, tres autem proprietates, sicut ipsi nostro dogmate constituimus.

[**XLII**] REX.<sup>45</sup> [1] Hic vero ille, admirandum sane, inquit, non est, si gravi quam maxime fieri potest oratione, robur adiectis positioni falsissimae, quandoquidem scimus verborum hoc esse rationumque artificium ut ad alterutram contra- /V 78r/ dictionis<sup>46</sup> partem possit

<sup>38</sup> aprehensum V.

<sup>39</sup> et Ζ

<sup>40</sup> Arist. *Metaph.* 12.1072b13–30.

<sup>41</sup> a Ζ

<sup>42</sup> neque igitur est bis V.

<sup>43</sup> a se ipso ut "catchword" in marg. inferiori sed non in textu proximae paginae scr. Ζ.

<sup>44</sup> sit om. Ζ.

<sup>45</sup> nomen interlocutorum non scr. Ζ, sed lineam vacuam inter interlocutores imponit.

<sup>46</sup> contradictioni VΖ.

argumentari. Illud tamen est admiratione<sup>47</sup> dignissimum: si ibi<sup>48</sup> hisce machinationibus tantum persuasionis inducis ut certa fide haec credas aut quae sic dicantur vera omnia esse<sup>49</sup> arbitrare. Verum fidei tue causa fortasse ducitur ex consuetudine, cuius quanta sit vis testis est Aristoteles, ubi ostendit fabulosam puerilemque opinionem plus /Z 108v/ posse quam veritatis cognitionem.<sup>50</sup> Sed haec ipsa omit-tenda iam sunt. Illud porro audire iam cupio<sup>51</sup> an ipsi quoque putetis resurrectionem<sup>52</sup> mortuorum futuram quamque demum vitam revicturibus attribuatis; utrumne hanc quae sensu pariter atque intellectu viget an quae solo intellectu; quamve etiam aliam praeter hanc.

[XLIII] PHILOSOPHUS: [1] Saepe iam, inquam, ego testatus sum nos ad hanc quam legitime<sup>53</sup> habemus fidem venisse non humanis adductos rationibus verborumque artificio, sed a prophetis et evangelis, quae quidem<sup>54</sup> et vos consentitis /V 78v/ a deo profecta esse, tum vero etiam a miraculis atque operibus per quae universus orbis ad unum deum conversus est ab errore. Nisi enim verbis opera convenisset, liceret fortassis addubitare.<sup>55</sup> Si autem opera non solum verbis<sup>56</sup> conveniunt, sed omni praedicatione clarius testimonium praebent, quisnam relinquatur dubitationi locus fidem<sup>57</sup> hanc nostram a deo non advenisse? An non, quaeso, per universam terram praedicatio statim excurrit? Nonne in toto orbe, relicto priore cultu ac ritu, homines accurrerunt ad fidem quae est in Christum? Nonne per evangelium maria terraeque omnes unum deum cognoverunt? Nonne populi omnes cunctaeque civitates, posthabito illo ac voluntario vivendi genere, plenam virtutis vitam elegerunt<sup>58</sup> /Z 109r/ atque ad ultimum finem conversi sunt? Haec autem omnia per quos, rogo, effecta sunt? Per idiotas nempe rudesque homines, /V 79r/ nihil ex se habentes quod verendum atque insigne esset. Erant enim tenues

<sup>47</sup> admirationi ῥ.

<sup>48</sup> sit ibi: si tibi ῥ.

<sup>49</sup> omnia esse: esse omnia ῥ.

<sup>50</sup> Cf. Arist. *Eth. Nic.* 7.1146b24–31.

<sup>51</sup> iam cupio: procupio ῥ.

<sup>52</sup> resurrectionem *et similiter interdum postea, sed interdum recte V.*

<sup>53</sup> legitime V.

<sup>54</sup> quae quidem: quoquidem ῥ.

<sup>55</sup> addubitare ῥ.

<sup>56</sup> rebus ῥ.

<sup>57</sup> idem ῥ.

<sup>58</sup> obligerunt ῥ.

et ignobiles extremae conviventes paupertati. Neque enim ditescere affectabant, sed—quod maius est habendum—a persequentibus urgebantur pellebanturque et tamen potentiores assidue reddebantur, tantamque malitiam superabant quanta in vita hominum cernebatur. Praeter haec autem Romanorum imperatores, cum totius, ut ita dicam, orbis domini essent, maxime studuerunt fidem hanc e medio tollere. Neque tamen nihilum<sup>59</sup> profecerunt,<sup>60</sup> sed caedendis<sup>61</sup> quidem Christianis defessi sunt, cum per eas tamen caedes<sup>62</sup> nihil proficerent.<sup>63</sup> Nam qui nostrae fidei adhaerebant plures assidue mactatis erant hominibus. Haec igitur si quis asserat absque divina potentia facta esse omnia, potius quam quod verum est dicet. His ergo adducor ut<sup>64</sup> credam. His itaque rationibus affatim nos ubertimque utimur, sed neque autem adversus eos qui haec /V 79v/ nostratia non admittunt. Est aliunde potius quam hinc<sup>65</sup> totis viribus irruendum. Quod si tamen oppositas<sup>66</sup> rationes plus habere virium intelligerem, veritatem /Z 109v/ ab illis ullam videri,<sup>67</sup> nimirum puderet me cuique plus rei quam veritati tribuere neque prae cunctis rebus quod verum mihi appareret, arripere. Nunc vero, cum nullam hac ipsa firmiorem rationem videam, teneo,<sup>68</sup> et amplector quod apparet, optimum esse putans me id praestare quod odio ac iudicii examine cariturum sit si clarissimae adhaeream veritati. Nam nisi vere mihi persuasum esset veritatem inesse illis quae nos legitime<sup>69</sup> credimus, ne, si moriendum quidem mihi esset, morarer quin illico, ad id quod melius appareret veriusque accederem. Itaque quod ad meam hanc constantiam fidemque pertinet, nihil<sup>70</sup> amplius dicam.<sup>71</sup>

<sup>59</sup> hilum V; illi hilium Z.

<sup>60</sup> puto legendum "illud profecerunt" in marg. V (*verba scribae?*).

<sup>61</sup> sedendis Z.

<sup>62</sup> sedes Z.

<sup>63</sup> cum per eas . . . proficerent: a restatement of neque tamen nihilum profecerunt; in transferring the translation from his rough draft to his polished copy, the translator failed to eliminate one of these clauses.

<sup>64</sup> rationibus ante ut add. Z.

<sup>65</sup> hinc om. Z.

<sup>66</sup> apposita Z.

<sup>67</sup> si intelligerem has be understood as also governing videri.

<sup>68</sup> et ante teneo add. Z.

<sup>69</sup> legitime V.

<sup>70</sup> nihil: in his Z.

<sup>71</sup> dicem Z.

[2] Resurrectionem /V 80r/ vero corporum ipsi quidem censemus fore neque horum quidem fore, horum<sup>72</sup> autem non fore, sed omnium aequae humanorum corporum. Vitam vero quam qui resurgent victuri sunt non qualis haec praesens est putamus fore, sed aliam denique congruentem supremo illi eorum fini ac termino. Nam nec etiam eos credimus fore in geniturae suae loco, sed longe diviniorem illis attribuendum locum, ubi verisimile<sup>73</sup> sit nec plantarum vita nec sensu praedita eis vivendum esse, quandoquidem quae sensu pollet sine germinali<sup>74</sup> esse non potest. Nihil enim sentit quod vitae huiusmodi expers sit. Haec autem /Z 110r/ tunc esse non poterit unum quodque eorum quae aliquid operantur. Sunt operis illius gratia, ut philosophus libro secundo Coeli testatur.<sup>75</sup> Talis autem<sup>76</sup> vitae opus est alere, augere, generare, quae munera revicturis non dantur. Id enim gratia cuius<sup>77</sup> haec sunt<sup>78</sup> ab eis procul absistit. /V 80v/ Revicturi ergo tali vita frui non possunt. Neque enim ibi amplius erit alimenti usus quia tunc denique cessabit corporum fluxus. Neque oportebit aliud<sup>79</sup> pro eo quod semper defluat. Augescere autem quod perfectum fuerit<sup>80</sup> minime convenit. Ad hoc enim incrementum pertinet ut olim perficiatur. Moveri autem non est<sup>81</sup> eos qui iam ibi consistunt. Quo moveri oportuit aut incrementum perget? In infinitum si et interitu caritura sit vita. Ipsa quoque generatio idem<sup>82</sup> procul expellitur. Neque enim amplius augebitur hominum multitudo. Neque mors erit, ut eius remedium generatio futura.<sup>83</sup> Quin<sup>84</sup> etiam locus ipse, in quo singulis erit quies ac terminus, nullo pacto generatione<sup>85</sup> admittit.<sup>86</sup> Erit enim quies illa super omnem generationi congruum

<sup>72</sup> eorum ζ.

<sup>73</sup> verisimile V.

<sup>74</sup> in marg. V: φυτικῶς.

<sup>75</sup> Arist. *De Caelo* 2.286a31–b9.

<sup>76</sup> aut ζ.

<sup>77</sup> gratia cuius: cuius gratia Z.

<sup>78</sup> sunt om. ζ.

<sup>79</sup> offere ante aliquid add. ζ.

<sup>80</sup> fuerint ζ.

<sup>81</sup> non est bis ζ.

<sup>82</sup> inde ζ.

<sup>83</sup> *Scil.*, futura sit, but a simple present would seem to have been a better.

<sup>84</sup> qui ζ.

<sup>85</sup> nullo pacto generatione : generatione nullo pacto ζ.

<sup>86</sup> admittunt ζ.



locum. Reliquum est igitur ut ea<sup>87</sup> solum vita hominum futura sit quae intellectus actu pollet<sup>88</sup> ac viget. Tunc enim beatis maxi- /V 81r/ me convenit immortalibus divinisque effectis.

[XLIV] REX: [1] Quae vero, inquit ille, corporum vita tunc erit si nec plantaris<sup>89</sup> anima nec sensu praedita munere suo fugatur?<sup>90</sup> /Z 110v/Vivere enim corporis non est secundum rationalem vitam, sed plantari primum vivit, dein sentiente. Quibus extractis, vivere corpus non potest. Sed superfluo iam cum intellectu erit cum is quidem nihil inde utilitatis sit accepturus. Frustra autem illi coniungatur. Quin vero potius non nihil detrimenti passurus sit. Nullo enim pacto fiet quin aliquid inde prodeat quod intellectus operatio<sup>91</sup> sit impedimento. Futurum hoc itaque pacto non modo superflua erit corporis resurrectio, sed ad deteriorem quoque statum rationalis animae. Verum neque ipsi corpori melius fiet aliquid si resurgat. Non enim nutrietur; non sentiet; nulla denique suavi ac iucunda re perfruetur; sed instar alioqui simulacri cuiusdam ab intellectu cir- /V 81v/ cumagetur ut illi iam melius sit futurum si<sup>92</sup> in pristino elementorum statu relinquatur. Neque sic nullam ad opportunitatem immutetur. Quid enim boni illi amplius fiet immortalitate donato si<sup>93</sup> nec suavi aliquo perfruetur nec auditu prorsus id capiat? Sic enim lapis, sic et elementa esse poterunt immortalia. Tum scire id cupio: cum suis necne omnibus particulis surrecturum<sup>94</sup> sit corpus? Si enim iis careat, in priori<sup>95</sup> forma non erit, sed aliud quodammodo ad diversum corpus resurget. Sin cum eis resurgat, frustra ibi erit oculus reliquaque sensoria cum nullus<sup>96</sup> ibi sit sensus. Frustra vero aliquid ne ipsa quidem natura, nedum deus efficiat. Idem quaque<sup>97</sup> asserendum est et de particulis corporis /Z 111r/ quibus plantaris indiget vita. Aut enim illa nequicquam erunt, earum functione sublata, aut corpus sine illis resurget. Neutrum vero rationi<sup>98</sup> /V 82r/ consonum est aut

<sup>87</sup> a ζ

<sup>88</sup> pollet *om.* ζ.

<sup>89</sup> *in marg. V:* φυτική.

<sup>90</sup> fungatur ζ.

<sup>91</sup> operationi ζ.

<sup>92</sup> adeo *ante* si *add.* ζ.

<sup>93</sup> sic ζ.

<sup>94</sup> surecturum *V.*

<sup>95</sup> priore ζ.

<sup>96</sup> nullis ζ.

<sup>97</sup> quoque ζ.

<sup>98</sup> congru *post* rationi *del. V.*

verisimile. Totius igitur atque integri corporis resurrectio frustra erit si nulla ei reddatur vitalis operatio. Neque enim puto alias quidem illi dabitur, alias vero non dabitur. Hoc enim insulsissimum foret cum illi omnes similiter debeantur. Talis igitur resurgentium vita ponenda non est, sed multo praestat, quod et nos affirmamus, asserere,<sup>99</sup> qui censemur resurgentes mortuis<sup>100</sup> vivere ac sentire, tum gaudere, trisitari, aliaque vel agere vel pati quae iucundum aliquod aut triste consequitur.

[XLV] PHILOSOPHUS: [1] Pulchrae, inquam ego, rationes atque ad faciendam fidem aptissimae; haud tamen illis concordēs quae nos passim de resurrectione sentimus. Atqui oportet rationes omnes quae ad probandum aliquod afferuntur subiectis rebus esse concordēs nec dissonare. Hoc autem solius est mendacis proprium; omnis autem veritas subiecto est consona. Ita vero spectemus. Utrique /V 82v/ credimus resurrecturos a mortuis nequamquam fore in loco generationi congruo, sed beatos quidem fore in coelo, miseros autem in subterraneo impiorum loco poenas suorum scelerum expensuros, tum et beatos et miseros immortales demum fore senisque<sup>101</sup> expertes, minime vero illos aut genituros esse aut parituros, ut pote hominum numero Z 111v/ iam finito. His itaque positionibus illa quae vos affertis minime consonant. Perfectio enim plantaris vitae in eo est ut unum quodque gignat sibi ipsi persimile atque ideo, auctis iam et perfectis, generatio advenit. Aliae vero talis animae functiones generationis causa illis tributae sunt. At vero iam inter nos constitutum est generationem tunc non fore. Igitur alia plantaris vitae officia, quorum generatio quaedam perfectio est, fore concedentur? Si enim desinat esse quod maius est, neque quod est minus tunc erit. Hinc /V 83r/ vero etiam<sup>102</sup> constare potest nullam revicturis nec nutritionis nec incrementi nec geniturae functionem futuram. Haec namque cuncta officia per motionem fiunt. Tum alteratio, digestio, inessio,<sup>103</sup> assimilatio, praeterea et auctio eiusque quod simile est processio,<sup>104</sup> ut ex se ipso manifestum est. Tunc vero nullam fore motionem

<sup>99</sup> efficere ζ.

<sup>100</sup> a ante mortuis add. ζ.

<sup>101</sup> seniisque ζ.

<sup>102</sup> et ζ.

<sup>103</sup> scil., inhaesio; in marg. V: πρόσφυσς.

<sup>104</sup> in marg. V: πρόσδοξ.

continget neque mutationem, ergo neque actum qui per motionem efficitur, quod autem par sit; nullam tunc fore motionem neque illis convenire quae a nobis constituta sunt. Est autem hoc fideli memoria illis retinendum qui velint ubique vera sentire ita ferme constabit. Omnes enim naturae motus sunt propter coeli motionem, ut ostenditur octavo Naturalium Principiorum libro.<sup>105</sup> At coeli motus tunc desinet. Quod si ille sit, erit quoque aliarum spherarum motus. Quibus sic positus, /Z 112r/ necesse est generationem fieri et corruptionem, tum et universum mundi ordinem, qualem esse nunc cernimus. Ubi enim sit quod agat et quod patiat /V 83v/ eaque ita se habeant<sup>106</sup> ut nunc habent, aliquod opus fiat necesse est. Haec autem ita nunc, fore utrique pariter negamus. Tunc itaque plantaris vita esse non poterit; idemque probatur et loco ubi tunc erunt qui surgent a mortuis. Unicuique enim loco quae illi convenient opera tribuuntur. At extremo illi termino talia opera non conveniunt. Sunt enim illa ad hunc locum spectantia. Constat igitur plantarem vitam eliminandam tunc fore.

[2] Restat igitur ut de sentiente nunc videamus. At vero quod ad hanc pertinet<sup>107</sup> prius ostendimus, non posse eam, videlicet, esse si plantaris vita non sit, ut philosophus docet primo libro De Anima.<sup>108</sup> Igitur hac summota facessere et illa necesse est. Praeterea vero animantibus quae ratione carent sensus a natura tributus est appetibilis rei causa ut ea,<sup>109</sup> videlicet, vel petant vel aversantur. Appetitus autem minime extenditur nisi ut humi vitam conservet. Alia siquidem /V 84r/ operatio id genus animantibus data non est nisi quae pertineat ad propriam ipsorum salutem, ratione autem praeditis non solum ob id sed non minus propter intellectus animique functionem. Subiiciunt enim intellectui sensibilium rerum species. Ipse vero inde sibi assumit<sup>110</sup> speciem intellectualem, quodque est universale absque materia individuisque proprietatibus, atque ita demum ad scientiam rerum pervenit. In ipsa vero resurrectione<sup>111</sup> neutrum /Z 112v/ horum poterit<sup>112</sup>

<sup>105</sup> Arist. *Phys.* 8.260a1–10, 261a3–26.

<sup>106</sup> a *in* habeant *supra* lin. scr. V.

<sup>107</sup> pertinet *om.* ζ.

<sup>108</sup> Arist. *De Anima.* 1.411b27–30.

<sup>109</sup> eam ζ.

<sup>110</sup> asumit V.

<sup>111</sup> rusurrectione V; resurrectionem ζ.

<sup>112</sup> horum poterit: poterit horum ζ.

esse. Intellectus enim amplius ope sensuum non indigebit neque propter appetitum quem natura instituit ad animantium<sup>113</sup> salutem neque propter intelligendas species; sed ex sua ipsius vi eas intelligit. Tum ex uno illi principio, cum quo assidue praesens erit, quodque, ut par est, intuebitur. Nullus itaque ibi erit<sup>114</sup> sensuum usus nec iis qui beati nec iis qui miseri sint futuri. Itaque<sup>115</sup> neque sensibus pol- lentem vitam vivere illis continget qui revictu- /V 84v/ ri sunt, sed eam<sup>116</sup> dumtaxat quae intellectu viget. Posse autem corpus solo intel- lectu vivere hinc plane constat. Ait enim Aristoteles et coelum<sup>117</sup> et sphaeras omnis amplius vero et stellas actionibus et vita praeditas esse, id quod etiam Plato posuit et qui in philosophia clariore<sup>118</sup> fuerunt.<sup>119</sup> Ea vero corpora nec plantarem habere animam nec sensibus uten- tem. Par est ut per se plane constat. Illis enim solus adest intellec- tus. Potest itaque corpus intellectus solius ope esse ac vivere. Siqui vero sunt qui coelestia illa corpora non opinentur vivere, nihil id sane pertinet ad praesentem hanc disputationem. Non enim id negant tanquam quod fieri minus possit, sed quia id fortasse suis ipsorum seditionibus<sup>120</sup> non conveniat. Potest itaque intellectus sufficere vitam corpori. Quod si hoc possit, non frustra unquam corpus ipsum /Z 113r/ resurget, sed ut vitam maxime habeat; nec<sup>121</sup> praeterea veluti mutum quoddam sordidumque /V 85r/ simulacrum ab intel- lectu circumferetur, sed illi vitam suggeret<sup>122</sup> intellectus suumque sibi vehiculum illud faciet. Quod vero ipse ope corporis nulla munus<sup>123</sup> sit admirandum non est. Non enim propter hoc ipsum corpus illi restituetur, sed ob solam dei iustitiam adimplendam<sup>124</sup> quia utique ad utrumque, quod, videlicet, bonum esset et quod honestum, min- isterium suum contulit. Aequum erit igitur totum hominem quod sibi debeatur accipere. Fortasse autem neque penitus separabilem speciem

<sup>113</sup> aiantium V.

<sup>114</sup> tibi ante erit add. ζ.

<sup>115</sup> ita ζ.

<sup>116</sup> ea ζ.

<sup>117</sup> et coelum bis ζ.

<sup>118</sup> clariores ζ.

<sup>119</sup> Cf. Arist. *De Coelo* 2.279a25–30, 289a29–31; Plato *Tīm.* 34a8–b9, 36d8–37c5.

<sup>120</sup> positionibus ζ.

<sup>121</sup> hac ζ.

<sup>122</sup> suregeret ζ.

<sup>123</sup> usuris ζ.

<sup>124</sup> in marg. V: τὰγαθόν puto ad cultum pietatis pertinere, honestum vero quoad mores et consuetudinem.

deus animam creavit, opifex mundi huius,<sup>125</sup> sed formam quae per se quidem substantiam suam habeat, sed tamen corpori formam coniunctam,<sup>126</sup> quandoquidem homo ex utraque substantia est compositum, quasique<sup>127</sup> contractum.<sup>128</sup> Minime autem sola est forma. Nam si anima ratione pollens forma<sup>129</sup> esset penitus separabilis, quid ita corpori coniunctam oportuit? Quam enim Plato rationem attulit falsam esse ostendimus, ut iam /V 85v/ non modo divinae iustitiae causa rursus ab anima suum corpus resumendum sit, sed ea<sup>130</sup> fortasse non est penitus separabilis forma. Quod si par est melius esse animae habenti corpus, par quoque est ut quod suum fuit ab ea iterum resumatur. Reddetur autem illi corpus non qua organicum (quod enim fuit huiusmodi dumtaxat ei<sup>131</sup> tributum fuerit), sed qua olim suum fuit corpus. Fine etiam sublato, quae sunt ad finem utique ipsa non erunt. /Z 113v/ At vero finis ille cuius gratia organa illa corporis sunt ad praesentis vitae commodum necessaria; tunc penitus auferentur, ut superius ostensum est. Igitur et quae ob finem illum facta<sup>132</sup> fuerint abesse tunc oportebit. Itaque non qua organicum sit corpus tunc<sup>133</sup> resurget ad vitam, sed qua olim rationalis animae fuit corpus, ut, videlicet, semper cum ea sit iuvatque immortale atque exitii expers ef- /V 86r/ fectum. Tum vero nec alterari aptum nec demutari tunc sane non erit. Cur quicquam melius operando perficiat? Talia vero philosophus esse ait astrorum corpora, ut quae divina sint. Non enim ea suapte sponte moveri affirmat, sed moventibus spheris, ut ostendit XII Methaphisicorum libro.<sup>134</sup> Putare autem frustra corpus esse resurrecturum nisi voluptate sensuum perfruatur, ut modestius loquar, non modo non est necessarium, sed alioqui ne rationi quidem est consentaneum. Voluptas enim non est actionis illius quae sensu utitur praevious nec principalis finis, sed tantummodo actionem consequitur delectabilemque positum finem facit. Non est igitur propter se ipsum sed propter finem, quod sane ipsum

<sup>125</sup> The location of this appositional phrase seems to be a *lapsus interpretis* since it belongs immediately after *deus*.

<sup>126</sup> coniunctaque ῥ.

<sup>127</sup> quasique ῥ.

<sup>128</sup> contractum *Monf.*: contrumque Vῥ.

<sup>129</sup> Nam si anima ratione pollens forma *om.* ῥ.

<sup>130</sup> quod *ante ea add.* ῥ.

<sup>131</sup> hic *ante ei add.* ῥ.

<sup>132</sup> facta *om.* ῥ.

<sup>133</sup> hinc ῥ.

<sup>134</sup> Arist. *Metaph.* 12.1073b17–1074a17.

revicturis non congruit. Qui ergo aliquid ratione voluptatis ne quicquam erit si id voluptate non egeat cuius gratia voluptas est aut facta olim fuit? Voluptatem autem propter se expetendam non esse sed propter finem /V 86v/ patet manifestissime. Omnis enim voluptas esset eiusmodi /Z 114r/ ut propter se expetenda esset neque honestate aut turpitudine humanae actiones inter se differrent, sed voluptate duntaxat, quod opinatus est Epicurus. At haec opinio demolitur hominum vitam. Cuncta siquidem homini audenda et patranda forent. Unde aliquid adventurum esset voluptatis. Praeterea vero, si finis ipse non adsit, cessabit utique et voluptas, ut ex inductione apparet. Cibi siquidem usus tantisper suavis est dum<sup>135</sup> plenitudo adveniat, caeteraque omnia quae sensui sunt iucunda tantisper oblectant dum corpus indiget iis quae appetit ulterius autem nequaquam Non est igitur voluptas propter se ipsam sed propter finem actionis esse cui ea supervenit haud itaque potest irrita illa efficere quibus ipsa non adsit. Adde autem quod oblectari non est corporis sed animae quae<sup>136</sup> corpore ipso /V 87r/ utitur. Haud itaque frustra erit resurrectio cum anima propriis actionibus per seipsam oblectari atque exultare possit. Potest autem formae ipsius finis ipsum quoque subiectum corpus et pulchrum et beatum efficere. Quoniam vero finis intellectus ut veritatem primam assequatur primumque intellectile,<sup>137</sup> hoc vero tunc beatis affatim superfluenturque aderit sine ullo medio tramite ac mutatione, quandoquidem hoc illis premium, quod auferrī nunquam possit, tribuet deus. Iccirco nullius /Z 114v/ rei corpus amplius indigebit cum iam rationali tunc animae coniunctum fuerit congruentemque vitam indeptum; nec pati quicquam nec interire iam poterit. Non enim quale nunc est resurget in vitam, sed divinum, gloriosum, leve, perlucidum, mutationis expers effectum, decensque animae rationalis vehiculum, quodque illa beata eorum vita sit dignum. Corpus autem infelicitum damnatur<sup>138</sup> immortale ipsum quoque /V 87v/ est, mutationisque expers futurum est. At non gloria illustrabitur neque ad potius ubi bonum sed ad peiora omnia animae coniungetur, ut pro quibus iniuriis deum hominesque affecit poenas persolvat.

<sup>135</sup> dum *supra lin. scr. V.*

<sup>136</sup> qua *V.*

<sup>137</sup> *I.e., finis intellectus est ut etc. One would expect a quod clause; the vero . . . vero in two consecutive clauses is also odd.*

<sup>138</sup> damnatorum *Z.*

[3] Haec nostra est, imperator, de resurrectione sententia, ad quam minime a philosophia pervenimus. Est enim dogma primo domini mei Iesu Christi. Prophetae autem id ipsum non manifeste dixerunt. Quae tamen ipsam resurrectionem insequuntur, philosophicis quoque rationibus demonstramus. Nihil prorsus admittendum putamus cui et haec a subiectis principiis non conveniat. Nam qui a philosophia dissident eiusque subiectis,<sup>139</sup> nihil sani constituunt. Oportet itaque ipsis saltem convenire neque sibi ipsis<sup>140</sup> pugnantia dicere nec ratione<sup>141</sup> praeditis, ut Simonides longa nos oratione monet.<sup>142</sup> Signum enim quo arguitur principiorum veritas illud est: cum nihil eorum quae inde procedunt alienum a ratione<sup>143</sup> esse contingat. Si vero contra eveniat,<sup>144</sup> id potissimum falsitatis est signum.

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<sup>139</sup> principiis non conveniat. Nam qui a philosophia dissident eiusque subiectis  
om. ζ.

<sup>140</sup> saltem convenire neque sibi ipsis om. ζ.

<sup>141</sup> rationem ζ.

<sup>142</sup> rationem ζ.

<sup>143</sup> Arist. *Metaph.* 14.1091a-7-9: *ho Simonidou macros logos.*

<sup>144</sup> evenit ζ.





## CHAPTER NINE

### MARSILIO FICINO AND RENAISSANCE PLATONISM

Edward P. Mahoney

Marsilio Ficino (1433–99) was doubtless one of the most interesting and accomplished figures of the Italian Renaissance. Although others before him had translated one or more of the dialogues of Plato, it was Ficino who published translations of all the known dialogues from Greek into Latin. That achievement would have rightly earned him a place in the history of scholarship and in the history of Western philosophy. But he did substantially more. First of all, he provided commentaries, some long and some short, for the various dialogues. Secondly, he attempted to formulate an overview of the dialogues that would present a focus and also provide a basis for putting the dialogues into a particular ordering. That is to say, the seeming inconsistencies among the dialogues would be overcome by Ficino's discerning certain key notions in some of the dialogues. And thirdly he provided translations of works of two leading figures in the history of Neoplatonism, namely Plotinus and Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite.

But what seems to be played down in recent scholarship regarding Ficino is that he wished to be and attempted to be a Platonic philosopher. What I wish to suggest is that it is a mistake to characterize Ficino primarily or essentially as an exegete of Plato and the Platonic tradition. He surely did know many sources in the Platonic tradition (which was heavily Neoplatonic) as it extended from late antiquity down through the Middle Ages to Ficino's own time. Indeed Ficino is well aware of that history and attempts to place himself in it.<sup>1</sup> Nonetheless Ficino does not aim simply to translate Plato and others he considers to be Platonists—Plotinus and the Pseudo-Dionysius. The major work of Ficino's life was not, I would emphasize, his translations or his commentaries but his *Theologia Platonica*. I will therefore first attempt to place Ficino in the context

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<sup>1</sup> The following abbreviation will be used: *Op.* = Marsilio Ficino, *Opera Omnia* (Basel, 1576). He speaks of the Platonic tradition in e.g. his 1489 letter to Martin Prenninger, *Op.* 899.

of the various projects of translating Plato that took place during the Renaissance. Then I will attempt very briefly to state something about the order among the dialogues that Ficino discerns. But my emphasis will be on setting forth in brief fashion Ficino's position and line of reasoning regarding three major topics that are central to Plato and the Platonic tradition and that are intrinsically interesting, namely: (1) metaphysical hierarchy and the use of spatial language; (2) innatism; and (3) the moral basis of political life. Ficino certainly considered himself to be operating as a Platonic philosopher and that we must recognize. Nonetheless we must also recognize that it is evident that at times he goes beyond the texts of Plato and Neoplatonism and borrows from the medieval tradition.

### 1. *Ficino—The Exegete of Plato*

From the turn of the fifteenth century and throughout the fifteenth century there was an explosion of translations of Plato. Others beside Ficino had provided translations of some of Plato's dialogues. These translations have been carefully studied in James Hankins' magisterial study, *Plato in the Italian Renaissance*.<sup>2</sup> Leonardo Bruni translated the *Phaedo*, but his translation did not communicate knowledge of the dialogue's philosophical contents in a clear fashion.<sup>3</sup> He also translated the *Apology*, the *Crito* (twice), the *Gorgias*, the *Letters* and part of the *Phaedrus*, and a heavily corrected version of the Alcibiades speech in the *Symposium*.<sup>4</sup> Rinuccio Aretino translated the *Crito* and the *Euthyphro*.<sup>5</sup> Francesco Filelfo translated the *Euthyphro* and three of the *Letters*.<sup>6</sup> Uberto Decembrio and Manuel Chrysoloras are responsible for a not wholly successful translation of the *Republic*, one which was used selectively by Uberto in his own dialogues *De republica libri IV* to justify the signorial rule of the Visconti at Milan. Uberto was not in fact a committed Platonist and he understood neither the metaphysical doctrine nor the theory of knowledge of Plato.<sup>7</sup> Uberto's son, Pier Candido Decembrio, authored a somewhat more literal

<sup>2</sup> James Hankins, *Plato in the Italian Renaissance* (2 vols.; Leiden, 1990).

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 47.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 51, 53, 67, 74, and 80.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, 85–87.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, 89.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, 106–17.

translation of the *Republic*, accompanied by glosses and summaries in which he attempted to defend Plato's apparent lack of order and his seemingly immoral doctrines.<sup>8</sup> At times he omits and mistranslates in order to protect Plato regarding such practices as wives in common, abortion and infanticide.<sup>9</sup> It is instructive to note that the Form of the Good is identified with God, and Plato's theory of knowledge is understood in terms of Augustine's theory of illumination.<sup>10</sup>

There were however strong critics of Plato during the Renaissance. One of the best known is George of Trebizond, whose dealings with others are marked by arrogance, contentiousness, and feuds. He authored a book comparing Plato and Aristotle (*Comparatio philosophorum Platonis et Aristotelis*) that attacks Plato on many fronts. He himself translated the *Laws* at the insistence of Pope Nicholas V and the *Parmenides* on commission from Cardinal Nicholas of Cusa. George's translation of the *Parmenides* was studied not only by Cusanus but also by Cardinal Bessarion and Marsilio Ficino.<sup>11</sup> In the *Comparatio*, George harshly criticizes Plato's style as boring and loquacious and accuses him of lacking demonstrations and logical order. Plato's polytheism and his belief in transmigration into beasts stand totally opposed to Christian doctrine. In regard to the *Republic*, George excoriates Plato for encouraging sexual immorality by pederasty, the sharing of wives, and the practice of men and women exercising together naked. Moreover, in the *Laws*, Plato encouraged drunkenness.<sup>12</sup>

Plato was defended against the vehement attacks found in George of Trebizond's *Comparatio*, by Bessarion in his own *In calumniatorem Platonis*.<sup>13</sup> However, Bessarion was hard pressed to defend the sharing of wives among the Guardian class in the *Republic*. He explained that such an arrangement was meant by Plato to take place only in a political community of the highest virtue ruled by a philosopher-king who has scientific knowledge and perfect virtue. Plato constructed the constitution for a second-best state in the *Laws*.<sup>14</sup> Bessarion is

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, 117–36.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, 136–37.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, 136.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, 165–86; fundamental on George of Trebizond are John Monfasani, *George of Trebizond: A Biography and a Study of his Rhetoric and Logic* (Leiden, 1976); *idem*, ed., *Collectanea Trapezuntiana: Texts, Documents, and Bibliographies of George of Trebizond* (Binghamton, 1984).

<sup>12</sup> Hankins, *Plato in the Italian Renaissance*, 238–41.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, 193, 209–10, and 217.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, 227–28.

also careful to show that he rejects other Platonic doctrines, for example the pre-existence of the soul and polytheism.<sup>15</sup> Nonetheless, he does consider Plato's views to be, as it were, reflections of the truth of the Christian faith that can serve as a means to draw humans to the Christian religion.<sup>16</sup> Indeed Bessarion uses Neoplatonic sources to argue for the fundamental agreement of Plato and Aristotle, and also to set out a Platonic theology that reflects the Great Return theme of *proodos* and *epistrophē* found in Plotinus and Proclus.<sup>17</sup> He defends Plato in regard to male love by distinguishing a divine love that is modest, holy, and a safeguard of chastity, praised by Pseudo-Dionysius and others. Moreover, he shows that George has misquoted and misinterpreted the *Phaedrus* and *Symposium*.<sup>18</sup>

Marsilio Ficino studied Aristotelianism of the scholastic variety when he was young but turned against it. He particularly feared the evil consequences of Averroës' doctrine of the unity of the intellect. Religious faith would be weakened.<sup>19</sup> He much preferred Platonism—really Neoplatonism—as helpful to Christianity.<sup>20</sup> He began to translate Plato in all seriousness in 1464 and had translated 23 dialogues by 1466. He wrote the *Theologia Platonica* from 1469 to 1474, and then returned to the Plato project. His translation of the dialogues appeared in 1484.<sup>21</sup> It is important to observe that Ficino made use of earlier translations, including those of Bruni, Uberto Decembrio, Bessarion, and George of Trebizond, as well as those of Calcidius and Moerbeke.<sup>22</sup> He also consulted Bessarion's *In calumniatorem Platonis* and thought very highly of it.

## 2. Ficino, Metaphysical Hierarchy, and Spatial Language

The concept and the image of the “Great Chain of Being” have fascinated more than a few recent scholars and philosophers. One of the most intriguing aspects of Ficino's metaphysics is that he really

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<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, 235.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, 236.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, 245–49.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, 258–61.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, 267–74.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, 286–87.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, 300–304.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, 310–11.

maintained at the same time two rather different schemes of metaphysical hierarchy, a fact underscored by Professor Kristeller in his classic monograph, *The Philosophy of Marsilio Ficino*, and also by others.<sup>23</sup>

Central to Ficino's metaphysics and his concept of the soul is the five-level hierarchy of being that he adopted, which has roots in Plotinus. Ficino elaborated a scheme according to which there are five general levels, namely God (*Deus*), Angelic Mind (*Mens*), Rational Soul (*anima*), Quality (*qualitas*) and Matter (*materia*). This is a development by Ficino of Plotinus's spheres, namely, the One, Nous, Soul, and a fourth sphere that included in itself Sense, Nature, and Body. Ficino has added Quality, which does not seem Plotinian, as a distinct level and has made Matter the lowest level. He has thus deliberately placed Soul at the center. By doing so he will have the basis of another argument for the immortality of the soul.<sup>24</sup> But Kristeller has pointed out that this system of metaphysical hierarchy is in practice actually subordinated to another hierarchical scheme, one that Kristeller calls "medieval." In fact, it has roots in Proclus and Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite.<sup>25</sup> It is not the broad spheres that prove to be the true elements of metaphysical hierarchy for Ficino but rather the natural species of things.<sup>26</sup> What needs to be emphasized, I believe, is that in regard to this other hierarchical scheme Ficino was part of a continuing dialogue among philosophers from the thirteenth century to the end of the sixteenth century. That conceptual scheme of metaphysical hierarchy, with roots in Proclus and Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite, is also reflected in the *Liber de causis*. This conceptual scheme of metaphysical hierarchy was adopted by Albert the Great but then elaborated with greater nuance by his student, Thomas Aquinas, who set it forth from the time of his earliest writings. Some of the others who took up the scheme included Siger of Brabant, Henry of Ghent, and Giles of Rome.

<sup>23</sup> Kristeller's monograph was first published in English in 1943, in Italian in 1953, and finally in the original German version in 1973; see Paul O. Kristeller, *The Philosophy of Marsilio Ficino*, tr. Virginia Conant (New York, 1943); *idem*, *Il pensiero filosofico di Marsilio Ficino* (Florence, 1953; rev. ed., 1988); and *idem*, *Die Philosophie des Marsilio Ficino* (Frankfurt am Main, 1972).

<sup>24</sup> Paul Oskar Kristeller, *Eight Philosophers of the Italian Renaissance* (Stanford, 1964), 42–43.

<sup>25</sup> See Kristeller, *Philosophy of Marsilio Ficino*, 75.

<sup>26</sup> Edward P. Mahoney, "Metaphysical Foundations of the Hierarchy of Being According to Some Late Medieval and Renaissance Philosophers," in *Philosophies of Existence: Ancient and Medieval*, ed. Parviz Morewedge (New York, 1982), 165–257, at 190.

According to this second metaphysical scheme that Ficino accepts, God and matter (or, non-being) serve as two poles that are “measures” of all in the hierarchy or “Great Chain of Being,” to borrow the title of Arthur Lovejoy’s celebrated book.<sup>27</sup> As things “approach” or get “closer” to God they have a higher “grade” (*gradus*) in the hierarchy of being, just as they have a lower “grade” as they “recede” from God and “approach” matter or non-being, the other “measure” in the hierarchy. There are however some serious problems with the scheme which had already been set out by critics in the fourteenth century—these criticisms were known to Ficino as we shall see. The key objection was that if God is “infinitely distant” from the highest creature in the scale of being, that is, the most perfect angel, just as He is infinitely distant from the lowest creature, let us say slime, then God is really equally distant from all creatures, and so He cannot in fact serve as a measure. The solution proposed was to say that only matter or non-being should serve as a “measure” since it is always at a finite distance from the creatures above it in the scale of being.<sup>28</sup>

Although Ficino will take God to be infinite, in his commentary on the *Philebus* he maintains that there can be only a finite number of species, that is, “grades” (*gradus*) in the scale or hierarchy of being. Indeed Ficino clearly states that the First Being—that is God, Who is one, true and good—cannot be infinitely distant from the created species, since then no one of them would be closer to Him than any other. Ficino appeals to Plato’s *Laws* when explaining how God is the “measure” of all things. The problem becomes even more evident in the *Theologia platonica*. At work is Ficino’s axiom: There is a first in every genus that is the cause of all in the genus (*primum in aliquo genere*). Ficino treats the hierarchy of being as such a genus, and he clearly accepts that if there are to be ranks or grades in the hierarchy of being then there must be a stop or halt at a highest step within the series. And yet Ficino also insists that God is infinite in power. It is striking that he lashes out and attacks those who would deny that things can be measured by their approach (*accessus*) to God, calling them “certain barbarians” (*quidam barbari*). One of his targets is surely Paul of Venice. Despite the seeming antinomy in his own thought, Ficino is insistent that God serves as the “first measure” (*prima mensura*) of metaphysical hierarchy. The supposedly radical

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<sup>27</sup> See Arthur Lovejoy, *The Great Chain of Being: A Study of the History of an Idea* (Cambridge, Mass., 1936).

<sup>28</sup> Mahoney, “Metaphysical Foundations.”

philosopher of the Renaissance, Pietro Pomponazzi, also maintains that God serves as such a measure for the hierarchy of being. So too does my friend Agostino Nifo.<sup>29</sup> This conceptual scheme of hierarchy unites Renaissance Platonists and Aristotelians who are divided on many other issues.

### 3. *Ficino and Innatism*

Throughout his *Theologia platonica* there are passages in which Ficino commits himself to a theory of innatism. We shall examine some of these passages, attempting to discern what philosophical problems may result from the theory as Ficino espouses it. But we shall also add a few words regarding other works of Ficino in which he sets forth an innatistic psychology of knowledge, that involves an innatism. This is especially important given the topic of the present paper, since Ficino makes remarks about innatism in some of his commentaries on Plato's dialogues. It might be good to recall here that Ficino was not the first philosopher in the Middle Ages or the Renaissance who adopted some form of innatism. There is of course Boethius, but there is also James of Viterbo.<sup>30</sup> One late-ancient commentator on Aristotle should also be recalled, since he had great influence during the Renaissance. I am thinking of the commentary on the *De anima* that is traditionally credited to Simplicius. It contains a very clear commitment to innatism.<sup>31</sup>

Ficino's remarks on innatism that appear in the *Theologia platonica* are especially concentrated in Books X and XI, which take up and reply to the challenge of those whom Ficino calls Epicureans. However, there are also important passages in the other 16 books that make up the *Theologia platonica*.<sup>32</sup> It might be well to begin by noting that Ficino held to the "active theory of sensation" which he correctly

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.* On Pomponazzi as "radical philosopher," see Martin L. Pine, *Pietro Pomponazzi: Radical Philosopher of the Renaissance* (Padua, 1986); for studies on Nifo, see my *Two Aristotelians of the Italian Renaissance: Nicoletto Vernia and Agostino Nifo* (Aldershot, 2000).

<sup>30</sup> Ficino mentions Boethius in Marsilio Ficino, *Platonic Theology*, ed. James Hankins, tr. Michael J. B. Allen (5 vols. to date; Cambridge, Mass., 2001–5), III, 214 (Book XI, chap. 3).

<sup>31</sup> Ficino refers to Simplicius in e.g. his Commentary on Plato's *Philebus* (ed. M. J. B. Allen, as below in note 42), 183; and in the preface to his Commentary on Plotinus, *Op.* 1537.

<sup>32</sup> There are eighteen books in the *Theologia Platonica*.

ascribes to Plotinus and Augustine. According to Ficino, when the soul senses in the body it undergoes (*patis*) nothing from the body but operates more attentively in what the body undergoes (*passio*). Sensing is the awareness of this more attentive operation; or, Ficino asks, is it the judgment on the bodily undergoing, a judgment excited by the soul itself?<sup>33</sup> Professing to follow the *platonici*, Ficino distinguishes four grades of knowing: sense (*sensus*), imagination (*imaginatio*), phantasy (*phantasia*) and intelligence (*intelligentia*), which is sometimes called mind (*mens*). Phantasy goes beyond imagination in being able to discern that an image (*effigies*) is of a particular human being. In like fashion the human intellect is able to know not only the common nature (*communis natura*) that is found in many individuals and the wholly incorporeal *rationes*, but also individuals.<sup>34</sup> Moreover, truth (*veritas*) and science (*scientia*) are only found in reason and not in the senses.<sup>35</sup> Ficino holds that the human intellect will know something, for example “man,” only when it gains some universal form (*forma universalis*) that signifies humans. This the *platonici* call the intelligible form (*intelligibilis forma*) or the intelligible species (*species*). The judgment which the intellect makes regarding the nature of man involves a conceiving or a conception (*conceptus et conceptio*) on the part of the mind and a definition of the thing that is to be known.<sup>36</sup>

Ficino’s innatism involves an innatism of the mind or intellect, but it also involves an innatism regarding sense knowledge that is related to the active theory of sensation already mentioned. Both sensing and thinking (*intelligere*) are vital operations that are brought about by a principle that is both active and internal. Accordingly, neither mind nor sense is formed by external bodies. On the contrary, both the internal sense and the mind judge all things through innate formulae (*formulae innatae*) that have been roused to the level of consciousness (*excitatae*). The intelligible species of universals are thus not formed in the mind from likenesses (*simulachra*) or phantasms, as would be the case according to Aquinas and other medievals. Rather the mind itself fashions such species through its own power. Ficino concludes that the intellect forms itself (*intellectum formare seipsum*), but he notes that in order to be able to do so it needs natural forms that lie hidden within the inner chambers of the soul itself. Indeed

<sup>33</sup> *Platonic Theology*, II, 234–40 (Book VII, chap. 6).

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, II, 262–66 (Book VIII, chap. 1).

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, II, 282–84 (Book VIII, chap. 2).

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, II, 296–98 (Book VIII, chap. 4).



he believes that such innate forms must be equal in number to the different kinds or species of creatures that are to be found in the world.<sup>37</sup> This latter claim obviously makes innatism rather vulnerable to attack. Besides the vast number of innate notions that would then be required, there would be another disconcerting consequence, namely that God would have provided Ficino and other Europeans with many innate notions that they would never need or use, for example that of a platypus.

Let us turn now to some of the arguments that Ficino offers for accepting innatism. One appeals to the order of the universe (*ordo universi*) and to hierarchical considerations. Ficino reasons that since intellectual cognition stands midway between divine knowledge and sense knowledge it should have characteristics that also stand midway. But God knows through his own immobile essence, whereas sense knows through moving qualities, that is, species that travel. Consequently minds know through immobile qualities that are called “innate species” (*species innatae*). Moreover, just as pure minds (*purae mentes*) that are above the human soul, that is, the angels, regard only that which is within themselves, while the senses regard only that which is in other things, the human soul, since it participates both in mind and also in sense, regards both forms that are outside it as well as those that are within. Ficino adds that while it is customary to speak according to Aristotle’s manner and say that the mind generates new intelligible species, one can say in a more properly Platonic fashion (*proprius more Platonico dicere*) that innate species (*innatae species*) are brought forth from the inner chambers (*penetralia*) of the mind. Indeed, while Ficino denies to the mind the ability to form true definitions of the essences of things on the basis of accidental likeness (*accidentalia simulachra*), he concedes that the mind does in fact construct such definitions by means of *rationes* infused into the mind by God.<sup>38</sup>

Ficino makes appeal to the ability of humans to find truth and also to human awareness of values and human evaluations of the beauty of products of human creativity to argue for innatism. That is to say, he takes the judgments that human beings make regarding the beauty found in human creations to reveal that some innate norms or standards are present in the psychological structure of all

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<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, III, 210–22 (Book XI, chap. 3).

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, III, 234–36 (Book XI, chap. 3).

humans. Ficino explains that from earliest age, the human soul eagerly wishes to have things that are true, good, worthy (*honesta*) and useful. But such yearnings presuppose that even before the soul wishes for such things it already has notions (*notiones*), forms (*formae*), “reasons” (*rationes*) of truth (*veritas*), goodness (*bonitas*), the honest (*honestas*), and utility (*utilitas*). We could not judge whether things were true or false, good or bad if we did not already know truth and goodness in some fashion. Ficino even suggests that evaluations of artifacts and other products of human creativity point to innate cognition. He questions how those who have not themselves had any experience in the respective arts could so often make correct evaluations, rightly approving or disapproving such human products as buildings, musical compositions and pictures unless nature had already bestowed some form of such products on them. Finally he points out that many young men, some without a teacher, others on the basis of a few rudiments given them by teachers, become very learned. They have however had much help from nature. Ficino sees Socrates engaged in the *Phaedo*, the *Meno*, and the *Theatetus* in showing this.<sup>39</sup>

Only a few pages later Ficino sets forth this line of argument in even more pointed fashion. Simple rural people (*rustici homines*) who have never thought about transcendent Ideas and adolescents who have heard nothing about such Ideas, when beautiful bodies present themselves to their senses, use their reason and in fact refer these bodies to Ideas. They do so first when they affirm that a body is beautiful, since they can do so only because the figure of such a body squares with (*quadrat*) the innate image or standard (*sigillum pulchritudinis intus ingenitum*). They do so secondly when they make comparative judgments that one thing is more beautiful than another insofar as the one thing approaches closer to the image or standard (*sigillum*). Ficino is insistent that that image or standard could not have been acquired earlier through teaching (*doctrina*) or a discovery (*inventio*). The machinery of our reasoning processes (*cogitationis machinatione concipitur*) simply cannot construct something that is more eminent than our souls. Consequently, the image or standard (*sigillum*) has its power or force (*vis*) from above the soul. Ficino even claims the authority of a common human experience to make his case. He says that when we first use our reason, especially to make comparisons, we refer many things to images or standards (*sigilla*) of this sort.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, III, 238–40 (Book XI, chap. 3).

He rejects other possibilities, namely that we learned these standards previously or gathered (*colligimus*) them from our experience or simply invented (*fingimus*) them.<sup>40</sup>

There is a clear connection between Ficino's innatism and demand for standards in judgment, on the one hand, and his moral and political ideas on the other. The law of all arts (*lex omnium artium*) is wholly unchangeable and is thus rooted in a law above our mutable minds which is called Truth. That unchangeable Truth is God, who is First Life and First Essence and therefore First Wisdom. Our soul therefore judges according to this law but it does not judge that law. Human laws too should not be judged once they have been established. In fact the founder of temporal or human laws (*conditor legum temporalium*), if he is a good and wise man, will consult the Eternal Law in order that he might discern through its unchangeable rules (*incommutabiles regulae*) what should be commanded and what should be forbidden.<sup>41</sup>

#### 4. *Ficino and Political Philosophy*

Ficino is not usually cited in histories of political theory although it has been claimed that his Platonism provided an elaborate justification, almost an ideology, for the Medici and their autocratic rule of Florence. It is not at all clear that Ficino was as close to the Medici as some would claim, nor that he was simply their mouthpiece. One would have thought that historians of political philosophy would have given more attention to a philosopher who claimed to be following Plato and the Platonic tradition and who wrote commentaries on the *Gorgias*, the *Republic*, the *Statesman* and the *Laws*. It is difficult to see how Ficino could study and analyze those dialogues in particular and not face in some ways the great issues of ethics and political philosophy that Plato raises. We should recall, however, that Ficino was not the first during the Renaissance to show great interest both in the *Republic* and also the *Laws* and to try to reconcile the strikingly different political forms of political rule that they propose.

Ficino awards to Plato the striking honorific title "Doctor of Human Souls" (*humanorum medicus animorum*) in his commentary on the *Gorgias*

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, III, 278–80 (Book XI, chap. 5).

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, IV, 66–68 (Book XII, chap. 5).

(*Op.*, 1315). He notes that both Callicles and Thrasymachus hold that morality and laws exist not by the order of nature (*naturae ordine*) but solely by the opinion or the contrivance (*fictio*) of human beings (*Op.*, 1318). Against such a position Ficino declares that virtue and vice are judged by the law of nature (*naturae lex*) and not by human opinion (*Op.*, 1319). In his commentary on the *Protagoras* he speaks of an internal judge ruling within us, the light of reason, the stimulus of conscience; and he states that God directs all through an infused law. And in his commentary on the pseudo-Platonic *Minos*, Ficino insists that there is an Eternal Law (*lex aeterna*) that is immutable and found the same among all peoples. But he is careful to note that not all commands issued by a ruler qualify as true laws (*Op.*, 1134–35). It is instructive to note that Ficino appeals to Eternal Law and Natural Law in some of his epistles, for example, one that is addressed to Lorenzo de Medici. (*Op.*, 652–53)

When Ficino turns to the *Republic*, he treats Plato as a divine-like figure, even calling him *Plato divinus* (*Op.*, 1398). The reason is that in the city being sketched by Plato, he directs all actions, even the public actions, to the contemplation of God. Since God is the source of all laws, he is also the source of the city's composition. Ficino hopes that those living in such a city will themselves be "living laws" (*leges viventes*) (*Op.*, 1398; see also 1402). Not unexpectedly Ficino follows Plato and requires that the rulers know the Good if they are to be true rulers. The change is that for Ficino the Good is really God. The rulers must know God precisely because the citizens themselves must be made to be like God (*Op.*, 1408–9).

The problem that all who study Plato's *Republic* and *Laws* must face is how to reconcile the rather different conceptions of the political community that they contain. Obviously the *Statesman* (*Politicus*) also adds problems for anyone attempting to reconcile the different dialogues. Ficino faces the problem in his commentary on the *Laws*. He attempts to achieve a reconciliation by distinguishing three lights of wisdom, namely, Pythagoras, Socrates, and Plato. The wisdom of Pythagoras consists in divine contemplation, while the wisdom of Socrates consists more in human action. Plato differed in combining both sorts of wisdom. Plato alone could serve as a moderator between the human and the divine since his doctrine can be accommodated to ordinary human ways of acting. Ficino therefore describes the

*Republic* as Pythagorean and Socratic, but the *Laws* as more truly Platonic because of its more human approach to basic political problems, for example private property and the preambles to individual laws. Nonetheless, the purpose of the laws in the *Laws* remains much like that of the *Republic*, namely the worship of God (*Op.*, 1489–90).

Ficino prefers monarchy (*regnum*) as the best form of a political community *civitas*. The outstanding man who excels in virtue should be made king (*Op.*, 1497). There is little discussion of constitutions as seen in the *Laws* nor is there much interest shown in the institutional checks presented by Plato in the *Laws*, for example the complicated scheme of voting (*Op.*, 1507). But perhaps the political message of the *Laws* either escaped him or simply did not interest him. He is more concerned about God's providence for the city, that the rulers are themselves ruled by law, and that the constitution aim for the common good (*Op.*, 1449). Ficino's concept of "natural religion" plays a role here. When he comments on Book X of the *Laws*, he reveals that he holds that there is in all humans a natural religious instinct and also that much of Christianity is found in the religious views of Plato (*Op.*, 1516).

It seems difficult to accept the pragmatic reading that some have given to Ficino—that is, that he served as a witting or unwitting agent for the consolidation of Medici power—without also taking into account his serious and abiding commitment to Platonic philosophy, including political philosophy. Proponents of the pragmatic (not to say opportunistic) view hold that the Platonism made known to contemporaries by Ficino's translations and commentaries helped to legitimize the oligarchic rule of the Medici. Thus, it is supposed, by introducing the notion of a "philosopher-king" who combined power and "wisdom" as did Lorenzo, Ficino prepared the way for modern thinking about the state and the emphasis on the will of the ruler. This may or may not be true, since no one can control what others will make of a certain body of philosophical writings. Still, such a reading of Ficino ignores the role of the Forms as moral norms for Plato. Even more importantly, it ignores Ficino's own emphasis on the need for innate moral norms. Also ignored are Plato's stress in the *Laws* on the rule of law over the rulers, and the roles he assigns in the *Laws* to the elected assembly and the Nocturnal Council in the very make-up of the political community.

### 5. Conclusion

We have reviewed the role of Ficino as a translator of Plato in the late fifteenth century, emphasizing that he alone translated all the dialogues and was thus in a unique position to attempt to put forth an overview regarding the dialogues. Michael Allen has contributed much to our knowledge of this side of Ficino, stressing the centrality of the *Parmenides* and the *Sophist*. Ficino shows great interest in the later dialogues.<sup>42</sup> But our own purpose here was not to present Ficino as exegete of Plato and the Platonic tradition but rather to show him in his activity as a philosopher wrestling both with basic philosophical problems and challenges as well as with Plato and his later followers. We thus sampled Ficino in three basic areas of philosophical concern: metaphysics, theory of knowledge and political philosophy. We may not give him the highest grades for the strength of his arguments but we should surely have to admit that he was both follower of Plato and the Platonic tradition and also philosopher in his own right.

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<sup>42</sup> Michael J. B. Allen, *Icastes: Marsilio Ficino's Interpretation of Plato's "Sophist"* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1989). Among Allen's many other important contributions, see *idem*, ed. and tr., *Marsilio Ficino and the Phaedran Charioteer* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1981); *idem*, ed. and tr., *Marsilio Ficino: The Philebus Commentary* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1975); and *idem*, *The Platonism of Marsilio Ficino: A Study of His Phaedrus Commentary, Its Sources and Genesis* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1984).

## CHAPTER TEN

### VIVES' PARISIAN WRITINGS

Charles Fantazzi

When the young Valencian, Joan Lluís Vives, to use the Catalan form of his name, arrived at the University of Paris in the fall of 1509, he was a few years older than the usual beginning arts student. He was also better prepared than most of them since he had probably taken courses in grammar for two years, and three years of arts courses, which is to say dialectic and natural and moral philosophy, at the Estudi General of Valencia, newly established in 1500 by papal decree.<sup>1</sup> His Latin training was still in the traditional style, to judge by the prologue of his teacher, Daniel Sisó, to a *Grammaticale compendium* he published in 1490.<sup>2</sup> Among the grammars included in this manual were the usual medieval textbooks: the *Doctrinale* of Alexander de Villedieu, a grammar in hexameter verse, and the *Catholicon* of the Genoese Dominican, Giovanni Balbi, a grammar and etymological dictionary, which Erasmus frequently made the object of ridicule. The study of Latin was intended merely to prepare the student for understanding university textbooks in logic, philosophy, theology, jurisprudence, and medicine. As with other traditional grammars of this time, the examples given in the text are taken from writers of Late Latin rather than from the classical authors.

While there was provision at least for this rudimentary preparation in Latin at Valencia, the situation in logic was rather abysmal. The only professor in the subject of whom we have notice was Jaume Esteve, who saw to the publication of a *Lógica de Mestre Boix*, which seemed to be orientated towards nominalism. More important was the significant production of works on spirituality in Valencia at this

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<sup>1</sup> There were cathedral schools in the city since the middle of the third century and an earlier university existed since 1412, but the University as such was created by a papal decree of Alexander VI, a native of nearby Játiva, on 23 January 1500. It was ratified by King Ferdinand on 16 February 1502.

<sup>2</sup> Francisco Vindel, *El arte tipográfico en España en el siglo XV* (9 vols.; Madrid, 1950), IV, #118.

time, almost all of them in Catalan. They were all strongly influenced by the Nordic movement of *devotio moderna*, emanating from the Brothers of the Common Life, who emphasized a personal, contemplative spirituality based on meditations on the life, passion, death, and resurrection of Christ. Among these books were the four volumes of the *Life of Christ* by Ludolph of Saxony, the *Imitation of Christ*, which in Catalonia and Valencia went by the name of *Menyspreu del mon* (Contempt of the World), then attributed to Gerson, and the *Cordial del ànima* of Dionysius the Carthusian on the four last things. These pietistic writings had much more influence on the young Juan Luis Vives than the rudimentary knowledge of Latin and dialectic that he acquired in his Valencian schooling.

The chronology of Vives' sojourn in Paris, which began, as we said, in 1509, has been radically revised—both regarding his studies and his tirocinium in the classroom—after the sensational discovery by Professor Enrique González y González of the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México of a hitherto unknown edition of Vives' early works published in Lyons in 1514.<sup>3</sup> In his meticulous bibliographical research González was led to the only extant copy of the edition in the Bibliothek der Rijksuniversiteit in Utrecht (Rariora Bibl. Hisp. Duod. 120). It had been previously believed that Vives left Paris definitively for Bruges in 1512 but it is now clear that he must have remained there for two more years.<sup>4</sup> Various indications point to his continued residence in Paris: all the places and personages referred to in the works published in the Lyons edition evoke the Parisian milieu; the five *praelectiones* included in the edition must have been given in Paris since Vives was never officially licensed to teach at the University of Louvain; the dedicatory letter to Bernardo de Mesa, bishop of Tripoli, both in the Lyons edition of the *Christi Jesu Triumphus* and in an earlier *Opuscula duo*, published in Paris in June of 1514, has this closing salutation: *Vale. Ex Academia nostra Parrhiensi*.<sup>5</sup>

These writings of the young Vives are very little known. Some have been edited and translated in the Brill series of the Selected

<sup>3</sup> Enrique González y González, *Joan Lluís Vives de la Escolástica al humanismo* (Valencia, 1987), 81.

<sup>4</sup> The late Jozef IJsewijn lends his support to González' dating in "Vives' Jugendwerke neu datiert," *Wolfenbüttler Renaissance Mitteilungen*, 11 (1987), 57–58.

<sup>5</sup> Even in a heavily revised issue of this work contained in the *Opuscula varia*, published by Dirk Martens (Louvain, 1519). Vives still retained the original date and place of the letter, "Pariis, mense aprili, anno D. MDXIII."



Works of Vives but they have not been the object of any serious study.<sup>6</sup> They are very important in estimating the ideological struggle within the mind of the young student at Paris and his gradual assimilation of humanist ideals. This will be illustrated by calling attention to certain revisions he made in the works that were published in the Lyons edition when he republished them later in Louvain. The present essay will be but an introductory study of this transitional period in his life.

González reasonably postulates that the Lyons edition must be a reprint of an original lost Paris edition. From the earliest years of the age of printing, teaching at Paris was characterized by a fruitful alliance between the university and the printing press. In 1470 the rector and the librarian invited three German printers to set up shop on the premises of the University. They were succeeded by French-born printers, and by the last decades of the fifteenth century there were 60 presses in Paris and 40 in Lyons.<sup>7</sup> Far removed from the censorship of Paris, Lyons printers were freer to follow humanist trends in publishing. In the period of Vives' stay in Paris, 1509–14, the astounding number of 1,421 titles were printed there, 286 of which were texts for courses in grammar, logic, law, and medicine.<sup>8</sup> To these could be added another hundred for extracurricular courses, like those taught by Vives himself. Following the practice of Italian humanists, those who gave courses outside the usual college curriculum chose single authors and texts—Cicero, Virgil, Suetonius, Quintilian—but also the ever popular Neo-Latin poets. They would publish pamphlets illustrating the subject matter of the course, to be sold to the students, like the *dispense* in modern Italian universities, and they often produced their own editions of the texts to be studied. As a consequence, Vives assimilated in the city on the Seine a model of teaching which, as González remarks, had the odor of printer's ink.<sup>9</sup> He followed this example not only in the works first published in France but also for his lectures in Louvain later on. It is a little-known fact,

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<sup>6</sup> *Early Writings*, ed. C. Matheussen, C. Fantazzi, and E. George (Leiden, 1987); *Early Writings 2*, ed. Jozef IJsewijn and Angela Fritsen with Charles Fantazzi (Leiden, 1991).

<sup>7</sup> Cf. S. H. Steinberg, *Five Hundred Years of Printing*, rev. John Trevitt (London, 1996), 37.

<sup>8</sup> These figures are cited by González, *Joan Lluís Vives*, 139, from Brigitte Moreau, *Inventaire chronologique des éditions parisiennes du XVI siècle* (Paris, 1972–77).

<sup>9</sup> González, *Joan Lluís Vives*, 140: “con olor a tinta de imprenta.”

for example, that before writing his commentary and entertaining preliminary dream to Cicero's *Somnium Scipionis*, he had published his own text and argument of the work previously in Louvain.<sup>10</sup>

Vives speaks frequently of two of his teachers during his years in Paris, Jan Dullaert of Ghent and Gaspar Lax de Sariñena from Aragon. Both held chairs at various colleges in Paris during this time and were both students of the Scottish nominalist, John Mair, regent of the College of Montaigu. This was the last revival of nominalism although little or no originality was exhibited in the numerous commentaries and specialized treatises that were published. Vives mentions that he assisted at lessons on Aristotle's *Physics* given by Dullaert, accounted as one of the best natural philosophers of the day.<sup>11</sup> This facet of his teacher's writings and particularly his interests in astronomy and astrology were shared by Vives in his early career, as we shall see.

Gaspar Lax began teaching at Montaigu in 1512, the year in which Dullaert died at the youthful age of 28. He plays a leading role in Vives' *Triumphus Christi*, where he is depicted as a good and prudent man endowed with great intelligence. He lectured on Peter of Spain at Montaigu and published an impressive number of logical treatises on the most obscure aspects of terminist logic, especially the *exponibilia* and *insolubilia* which Vives ridiculed mercilessly, but in a rather good-humored way in the *In pseudodialecticos*. Towards the end of this tract Vives intimates that his two teachers had a change of heart themselves, saying that he often heard them complaining bitterly that they had spent so many years in such a futile and empty pursuit.<sup>12</sup> Yet the rebellious disciple would recall later on in the chapter on dialectic in his *De causis corruptarum artium* how often Dullaert would din into his ears "Quanto eris melior grammaticus, tanto peior dialecticus et theologus."<sup>13</sup>

In his denunciation of the aridities and subtleties of the Parisian doctors in the *In pseudodialecticos*, which is in the form of a letter to a fellow student from Aragon still in Paris named Juan Fort, Vives

<sup>10</sup> *Somnium Scipionis ex Ciceronis libro de republica excerptum. Argumentum . . . per Ioannem Lodovicum Vivem* (Louvain, 1520 and Antwerp, 1520). Cf. *Vives edicions princeps*, ed. Enrique González, Salvador Albiñana, and Victor Gutiérrez (Valencia, 1992), 124.

<sup>11</sup> Vives, *Opera omnia* ed. Gregorius Majansius (7 vols. in 8; Valencia, 1782–1790; reprint, London, 1964), VI, 201.

<sup>12</sup> *In pseudodialecticos*, ed. Charles Fantazzi (Leiden, 1979), 90.

<sup>13</sup> Vives, *Opera omnia*, ed. Majansius, VI, 86.

attempts to defend his compatriots. Many scholars of the day considered the Spaniards resident in Paris as the champions of this type of learning, but he maintains that they cannot be held to blame if by virtue of their superior intelligence they have become so adept in this corrupt science.<sup>14</sup> He admits that he himself had no mere smattering of this nonsense, so much so that he cannot rid himself of this knowledge, which constantly presents itself to his mind and obsesses his thoughts. Erasmus attested to his talents in the art of dialectic in a letter to Thomas More in June 1520, writing: "No one is better fitted to break the serried ranks of the sophists, in whose army he has served so long."<sup>15</sup>

Although it has been customary to conclude that on his arrival in Paris Vives studied at Montaigu under Dullaert and Lax, there is no proof whatsoever that this was the case. We know from various dedicatory letters that Lax was teaching at the Petit Sorbonne or Calvi in 1507 and 1508, but there is no certain knowledge of where he taught for the next three years. From February 1511 to August 1512 his writings indicate that he was teaching at the Abbey of Saint-Victor, just outside Paris. As for Dullaert, he taught at Montaigu from 1507 to the middle of 1509, but moved to the College of Beauvais that summer. González calls our attention to another Aragonese, Juan Dolz de Castellar, who began a three-year course in logic in the College of Lisieux in the autumn of 1509, the probable date of arrival of Vives in Paris. He was one of the most brilliant pupils of Lax and published several treatises on terminist logic, including a huge book of *Syllogismi*, in the opening and concluding pages of which he mentions Spanish students who assisted at his lessons.<sup>16</sup> Among them are two close friends of Vives: Juan Fort and the Valencian, Francisco Cristóbal. Both of them are characters in some of Vives' dialogues, and Fort, as we mentioned, was the addressee

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<sup>14</sup> It is true that the Spaniards were the leading lights in this last phase of nominalism in Paris. A good chronicling of this period is given in Vicente Muñoz Delgado, "La obra lógica de los españoles en París (1500–1525)" *Estudios* [a review published by the Orden de la Merced], 26 (1970), 209–80.

<sup>15</sup> Ep. 1107, lines 14–15, in *The Collected Works of Erasmus*, ed. James K. McConica et al. (Toronto, 1974–): *Correspondence*, tr. R. A. B. Mynors, VII, 295.

<sup>16</sup> Ricardo García-Villoslada says of his writings: "Sus libros son de lo más fastidioso, enrevesado, fútil, oscuro que ha producido la Escolástica decadente." *La Universidad de París durante los estudios de Francisco de Vitoria, 1507–1522* (Rome, 1938), 188.

of the *In pseudodialecticos*. In that polemical piece Vives recounts an anecdote about a book of syllogisms by an author whom he does not name, but who was very well known to Fort.<sup>17</sup> He tells of how they were all together drinking and singing in the baths on the Grand Rue St. Martin on the *rive droite*, when that certain author wrote out the *festino* syllogism, technically the third mood of the second figure, in great “festination,” as it were, and ejected it like an aborted fetus on the next morning. The logician referred to must in all likelihood be Dolz. From this and other reminiscences that Vives provides of his student days in Paris one gets the impression that he like other students of the time did not belong to one specific college, but wandered from one classroom to another to attend the lectures of various professors. Besides frequenting the lectures of Dolz at Lisieux it seems certain that he later attended classes of both Dullaert at the College of Beauvais and of Lax at Montaigu. Vives makes reference, too, in his *Commentary on the City of God* to having heard Lefèvre d’Étaples lecture at Cardinal College, where the new learning was more accepted.

Of all the professors teaching in Paris at the time the one who seems to have exercised the greatest influence over the young Vives was the humanist Nicolas Bérault. Once again Enrique González was the first to have perceived the connection between the publications of Vives during his stay in Paris and those of Bérault. The latter had studied law at the famous school of jurisprudence in Orléans, where he was born, and taught a public course there on the first two books of the *Pandects* entitled *De origine iuris* in 1511. By mid-May of 1512 Bérault was numbered among the savants assisting Josse Bade in Paris, publishing together with Louis Berquin the *Opera omnia* of Poliziano, derived from the Aldine 1498 edition. During this time he continued to study Greek under Aleandro, who had now transferred to Paris and was teaching at the Collège de la Marche. Among his students was the future poet, Salmon Macrin, who would later become a good friend of Bérault and Vives, for whom he wrote an introductory poem to the *Triumphus Christi*. Early in 1514 Bérault published a collection of three *praelectiones* with the printer, Thomas Kees: one to Cicero’s *De legibus*, another to the *Rusticus*, a hexameter poem from Poliziano’s *Silvae*, and a third to

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<sup>17</sup> *In pseudodialecticos*, 62.

the course on the *Pandects* that he had given in Orléans.<sup>18</sup> On 14 March 1514, he published for the first time in Paris, again with the printer Kees, the *Convivia mediolanensia* of Francesco Filelfo. In May of that year he published, with Kees and Hémon le Fèvre, the *Sideralis abyssus* of Tomaso Radini-Todischi. At the end of 1515 Bérault published the text of Suetonius' *Lives of the Caesars* for a course he was to give on that author, this time with his new publisher, Jean Barbier. The *praelectio* to that work, in which his disciple Macrin cooperated, appeared at the beginning of 1516. *En passant*, he does not have kind words about philosophy, of which he says: "Many despise philosophy as being thorny and too rigorous," but he commends the reading of history.<sup>19</sup> Vives did not include a *praelectio* to Suetonius among his early publications but it is interesting that later on he did give a course on Suetonius in Louvain in the scholastic year 1521–22. Curiously, noting that the life of Julius Caesar was *acephalum*, that is, without any preliminary chapters on Caesar's ancestors or his childhood, he decided to compose a kind of philological exercise, supplying his imitation of what Suetonius himself might have written.<sup>20</sup> It is an excellent piece of forgery, a very skillful illustration of the style of Suetonius. Strangely enough, other Renaissance philologists did not call attention to this obvious lacuna, neither Beroaldus in his commentary of 1493, nor Erasmus himself.<sup>21</sup>

It can be no coincidence that in his early career in Paris Vives chose texts for his private lectures that Bérault had lectured on, *viz.*, Cicero's *De legibus* and Filelfo's *Convivia*, and that he would pursue other mutual scholarly interests in the future. Bérault was not an outstanding figure like Erasmus or Vives but he was an active propagator

<sup>18</sup> They were entitled simply *In hoc opusculo continentur In libros Ciceronis de legibus et alia opera*. The single exemplar of this work is extant in the British Library, Moreau II, 765.

<sup>19</sup> Perrine Galand-Hallyn, "La *Praelectio in Suetonium* de Nicolas Bérault," *Humanistica lovaniensia*, 46 (1997), 62–93, at 68: "Philosophiam contemnunt multi ut spinosam nimis ac tetricam."

<sup>20</sup> It was published with various other works as *Tria capita addita initio Suetonii Tranquilli*, apud Simonem Colinaeum, 1527, and again in Antwerp by Martinus Kaiser, 1530. There were many more printings in Lyons, and it was translated into French by Georges de la Boutière, Lyons, 1556, *Ce qui ha esté ajouté à Suetonius par Vivès sur la vie de Gaye Jule César*.

<sup>21</sup> Modern editions make little reference to it: the revised Loeb edition (1990) says the beginning is lost while the Teubner simply uses asterisks with no commentary. Plutarch also said nothing of Caesar's ancestors and there is nothing available from other sources.

of the new learning and new methods of teaching. Despite her great admiration for Budé Madame de La Garanderie has this to say of these two proponents of French humanism: "If in this Parisian circle Budé is the most learned, Bérault is the most dynamic. The influence of such a professor cannot be accurately measured in historical terms."<sup>22</sup> Indeed Budé himself in a letter to Vives of 2 May 1520 describes Bérault as the leader of all intellectuals in Paris.<sup>23</sup>

The first book Vives published was a reprint of Dullaert's edition of the *Poeticon astronomicon* of the pseudo-Hyginus.<sup>24</sup> The two works bear identical titles and there are very few textual divergences between the two. Vives merely produced a more legible edition with the printer Jean Lambert, replacing the Gothic letters of Dullaert's edition with Roman characters. In addition to the poem of the pseudo-Hyginus it contains illustrations of the planets and the signs of the zodiac taken from Dullaert's edition, printed by Thomas Kees of Wesel, of the *De compositione mundi* of Paulus Venetus, or Paolo Nicoletti of Udine, a late Scholastic Averroist from the Venice-Padua region. On the final page of the book Vives added a letter to Juan Fort, in which he warns his friend that any mistakes in the printing should not be attributed to him since he did not see the book through the press. This carelessness was duly reported by his friend, Jan van Fevijn in a letter to Frans van Cranevelt.<sup>25</sup> Van Fevijn says that he enjoyed reading the work but would have liked it more if Vives had spent more time correcting the proofs. Jokingly Vives advises Fort to forget about the cavillations of Suiseth and the subtle points of logic of Gaspar Lax for a while and dedicate himself completely to Hyginus for three or four days.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> Marie Madeleine de La Garanderie, *Christianisme et lettres profanes (1515–1535)* (Paris, 1995), 49: "Si, dans ce cercle parisien, le plus savant est Budé, Bérault est le plus dynamique. L'influence d'un tel professeur échappe aux instruments de mesure de l'histoire." [N.B.: All translations are the author's unless otherwise indicated.]

<sup>23</sup> *Opera omnia Gulielmi Budaei* (Basel, 1557; reprint, London, 1966), 299: "doctorum hominum in urbe nostra veluti xenagogo."

<sup>24</sup> The real Hyginus, possibly of Spanish birth, was librarian of the Palatine library in Rome. He wrote books on agriculture, history and geography, all of which are now lost. The author of the *Poeticon astronomicon*, a mythological handbook is of a much later age. There were many editions of this work from 1475 onwards, mostly in Venice. Vives believed him to be a Spaniard.

<sup>25</sup> *Litterae ad Craneveldium Balduiniana*, ed. J. IJsewijn and G. Tournoy, *Humanistica lovaniensia*, 42 (1993), 2–51, at 25–26.

<sup>26</sup> "Linquas enim tantisper Suisethi cavillationes et Gasparis Laxis argutissima in dialectice puncta oportet, et te totum tres dies vel quattuor Hyginio dedas." *Early*

On 30 May 1514, the second and posthumous edition of Dullaert's *Meteorum Aristotelis expositio*, actually a commentary only on the first book, came off the press in Paris. Vives took the opportunity to write a very brief notice in memory of his teacher. He mentions that Dullaert had been a disciple of Mair and had taught at first in the College of Montaigu and later at the College of Beauvais. Vives' brief sketch, written for Francisco Cristóbal, a fellow Valencian, is not very generous to his master and ends with the ambiguous phrase: "I declare openly that I wrote nothing in the preceding out of gratitude or love of the great man, whose pupil I was."<sup>27</sup> It certainly seems to be an open renunciation of his own career as a logician.

These two publications are obviously the timorous beginnings of a young scholar finding his way in the world of publishing. The next composition is much more ambitious, a curious and rather audacious blend of pagan and Christian themes. He first published it with Lambert on 14 June: *Opuscula duo, Christi Jesu Liberatoris nostri Triumphus et Mariae parentis eius ovatio*. He added a third piece, to which he refers in the colophon: *cui Christi Clypei descriptio adiecta est*.<sup>28</sup> The first two pieces are in the form of an imaginary dialogue that is supposed to have taken place between various Aragonese friends of Vives and their professor of philosophy, Gaspar Lax de Sariñena. The *Clypeus*, which is not in dialogue form, is tacked on almost as an afterthought, perhaps to fill a blank page. In a later republication of these pieces, the *Opuscula varia* (Louvain, 1519), it precedes the other two and is disconnected from them. Vives selected a prelate of great renown for the dedication of his work, Bernardo de Mesa, bishop of Tripoli, later elevated to the See of Elne, near Perpignan. He had fulfilled important diplomatic missions to France for King Ferdinand and would later become famous through his advice to the king's *junta* concerning the treatment of the Indians in the New World. Although Vives tries to adopt a suitably courteous tone, he does not quite succeed in doing so. The language of the last paragraph hardly seems appropriate for addressing a bishop. He says, rather indelicately: "If you desire a supply of paper, you may buy it from the booksellers

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*Writings 2*, 8. Suiseth is the Latin name of Roger Swineshead, a Cistercian monk and famous logician.

<sup>27</sup> *Early Writings 2*, 14: "Quorum nihil me profiteor gratia aut amore tanti viri, qui eius discipulus fuerim, scripsisse."

<sup>28</sup> The entire colophon reads: "Pia Io. Lodovici Vivis opuscula Christi Iesu Triumphus et Mariae Dei parentis Ovatio, cui Christi Clypei descriptio adiecta est."

for an insignificant sum.”<sup>29</sup> He makes a bad pun with the words *equestri* and *pedestri*, in the sense of verse and prose, followed by a pagan expression, which again seems quite gauche in the circumstances, “Here you will find all the gods and goddesses.”<sup>30</sup>

Perhaps through the influence of Bérault or through a personal acquaintance with Vives, the young poet, Jean Salmon Macrin, wrote a poem of introduction to the *Triumphus*.<sup>31</sup> The poet repeats the sentiments expressed in the letter to Mesa, that the triumphs of Christ and his Blessed Mother, not the petty triumphs of men, will be the subject of the work. In the last distich he pays a fine tribute to the author: “These things were lately sung to you in a Roman key/By Vives, living glory of the Western shore.”<sup>32</sup> It seems very possible that Macrin himself may have provided the inspiration for Vives’ theme, for he had published a series of triumphal elegies, beginning in 1513 with an *Elegiarum triumphalium liber*, celebrating various military victories. This was followed by a poem entitled *De Christi super-benedicti assertoris nostri morte ἐφόδιον*, and poems to the Mother of God. The novelty of Vives’ prose dialogue is that he uses the fictional setting for didactic purpose, to impart philological learning, elements of natural history, Roman history and mythology, combined with Christian beliefs, like Christ’s harrowing of Hell or the qualities of the risen body.

The dialogue takes place on Easter Sunday as Vives, his roommate Juan Fort, and Pedro Iborra, after having gone to Mass in the morning, run into their professor of philosophy, Gaspar Lax, that evening at the entrance to the university and he invites them to his house for supper.<sup>33</sup> They are joined later by two other Aragonese students, Miguel de Santángel and Francisco Cristóbal, who brought with them a book of hours adorned with various miniatures, including the depiction of the triumphs of Julius Caesar. This leads Lax to exclaim how much more significant it would have been if it had been the triumph of Christ rather than of Caesar. At this point the

<sup>29</sup> *Early Writings* 2, 26: “Chartae certae copiam si desideras, a bibliopolis tibi quantilibet comparato.”

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*: “Nam et ibi dii sunt deaeque omnes.”

<sup>31</sup> Here he is called by his true name, Materne. Later Francis I dubbed him Macrin because of his emaciated appearance.

<sup>32</sup> *Early Writings* 2, 28: “Haec tibi Romano cecinit modulamine nuper/Hesperiae Vives gloria viva plagae.”

<sup>33</sup> In the Paris and Lyons editions there is an extended eulogy of Lax, omitted in the Louvain edition.



dialogue turns into a series of set speeches delivered by the various participants, comparing Caesar's triumph to that of Christ, which they were celebrating on that very day.

Lax begins with an explicit comparison between the two conquering heroes. Caesar celebrated five triumphs for the successful completion of five wars. Similarly Christ won five wars—against the world, the flesh, the devil, the Jews, and finally against death itself. The law governing a triumph stipulated that the conqueror must have slain 5,000 of the enemy in a single engagement.<sup>34</sup> Christ fulfilled this condition by killing those five deadly enemies, each of whom could kill thousands. In Lax's account of the assault on Hell, Christ converts the crude robe the servants had thrown over him into the *tunica palmata* and *toga picta* of the *triumphator*. Like the Roman generals he waited for three days before entering the city. Having fully qualified for a triumph, Christ, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, triumphed more rightfully and more gloriously than Caesar.

Lax then calls upon Miguel de Santángel to continue the same theme. The young theology student apologizes for his lack of skill in oratory but says that he will attempt to borrow the Asianic style of Cicero. His speech does not quite attain that quality, but seems rather to betray his theological training. It is replete with allegory: the four gleaming white horses that draw the chariot represent the four cardinal virtues; the consuls who go out to meet the victorious Christ are the Father and the Holy Paraclete, accompanied by hosts of angels; and Christ receives the titles that were awarded to Roman heroes, *patriae conservator*, *salvator ac liberator*. Juan Fort next delivers a long disquisition on the various types of victory crowns, using material from a detailed chapter in Aulus Gellius (5.6.5–7), an author much admired in the Renaissance. At the end of his speech in the Louvain edition he calls attention to the novelty of the subject matter, “Nunc primum hoc argumentum tractamus.”<sup>35</sup>

It is now the turn of Francisco Cristóbal, who contributes a speech on the part Mary played in Christ's victory. Vives uses an example from Livy's history of the Second Punic War (Livy 28, 9, 10). Marcus Livius Salinator and Gaius Claudius Nero both had a hand in the defeat of Hasdrubal in the battle at the Metaurus river, but in the case of a double victory one commander had to settle for an ovation, in

<sup>34</sup> Valerius Maximus 2.8, *Caput de iure triumphandi*.

<sup>35</sup> *Early Writings* 2, 70.

this case Claudius Nero. Similarly Mary deserves an ovation for her participation in the war against the devil. With bold incongruity the speaker compares the mother of God to Penthesilea, queen of the Amazons, citing a passage from the Cantic of Canticles (8:8) to support his comparison: "We had a little sister and she has no breasts," like the Amazons, whom Vives describes as "sine mammis."<sup>36</sup> Thus the mother of God in her life of maidenhood gave the example for legions of maidens. They will follow their leader, *ductatricem* (a word found only in Apuleius, which he applies also to Penthesilea), wherever she goes, like the 140,000 who followed after the Lamb in the Book of the Apocalypse.<sup>37</sup> They carry moon-shaped shields, symbolic of their chastity since the moon was associated with that virtue. Then Cristóbal relates Mary's crushing of the serpent under her foot, an exploit attributed to her from an allegorical reading of Genesis 3:15 and Apocalypse 14.<sup>38</sup> From these scriptural reminiscences the text reverts once again to the rules of the ovation as given in Livy, Gellius, and Valerius Maximus.

Pedro Iborra, the other student present, of whom we know nothing, now delivers his speech. He elaborates further on the nature of Mary's ovation, describing how the *imperatrix puella* enters on a winged horse instead of on foot, adorned with a crown of myrtle. Demonstrating his knowledge of Roman history, Vives has Iborra recall an episode from the early Republic, the ovation of Postumius Tubertus celebrating his victory over the Sabines in 503 B.C., in which he was the first to wear such a crown. Thus the myrtle branch, Venus' own insignia, becomes a trophy symbolizing Mary's victory over Venus Victrix. Iborra uses the description of the qualities of myrtle found in Pliny (15.124), adapting pagan learning to a Christian context. The oil of the myrtle was said to have the flavor of wine just as meditations upon the Virgin Mary taste of Christ's blood. According to Pliny again the tasting of myrtle is beneficial to the wayfarer, thus in Christian terms a help to us in our earthly pilgrimage. The sprig of myrtle also cures swellings in the groin, which Iborra allegorizes to

<sup>36</sup> *Early Writings* 2, 82.

<sup>37</sup> Vives neglects the fact that these are males, as a succeeding verse shows.

<sup>38</sup> In the Vulgate version of Gen. 3:15 the feminine pronoun *ipsa* is used, thus translated "she will crush, etc." This resulted in the interpretation of Mary as a second Eve, and her trampling of the serpent underfoot gave rise to the dogma of the Immaculate Conception. The passage was often conflated with the description of the woman in Apocalypse 14:1-6.

mean that it helps us resist the temptations of Venus. Admittedly this is a strange *contaminatio* of pagan and Christian lore, which exhibits a certain baroque quality, one might say, and youthful exuberance in the thought and style of the early Vives, not yet disciplined by *il fren dell'arte*.

God the Father and the Paraclete (Iborra calls them the two consuls) together with her son come out to meet Mary, whom they address as *fortissima imperatrix*. Vives, through Iborra, makes allusion in the words of God the Father to Mary's role of mediatrix of mankind and active participant in the work of redemption. In this, like Macrin, he follows the example of Italian poets, like Sannazaro, but especially Baptista Mantuanus, in exalting the role of Mary and writing poetry in her honor. The Feast of the Immaculate Conception had been instituted as recently as 1482 although the Dominicans still opposed it. Jean Gerson, chancellor of the University of Paris in 1395, had given great emphasis to her lofty status in works like the *De susceptione humanitatis Christi*, and Dionysius the Carthusian, whose works Vives knew well, had called her *redemptrix* and *salvatrix*.<sup>39</sup>

At the end of his speech Iborra reminisces about their old student days in Valencia and relates a story about their teacher of Latin, Daniel Sisó. As he was sitting one day under the porticoes of the university, he was joined by the poet, Juan Partenio Tovar, a professor of poetry and rhetoric at the University of Valencia in the early 1500s. The latter launched into an eloquent speech about Castor and Pollux and their intervention on the side of the Locrians in a battle against the Crotonians, appearing as two youths on white horses. Sisó countered with a story about Christ and his mother, whom he calls our Castor and Pollux. Then, as often, Vives turns from pagan mythology to the Scriptures, once again to the Apocalypse, the passage about the two olive trees and the two candelabra that John saw standing in the presence of the Lord of the earth (Apoc. 11:4). Sisó ends his discourse with a story about Judas Maccabeus, contrasting him with Greek and Roman heroes. On the eve of a battle against the Seleucid general Nicanor in 160 B.C. the prophet Jeremias and the high priest Onias appeared to him in a vision and gave him a golden sword. These two were none other than Christ

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<sup>39</sup> *De praeconiis et dignitate Mariae*, in *Doctoris Ecstatici D. Dionysii Carthusiani Opera omnia* (42 vols. in 44; Tournai, 1896-1935), XXXV, 516C.

and his mother, according to Sisó, who gave him the sword of the spirit, sharper than any two-edged blade.<sup>40</sup>

Returning to his role as moderator of the discussion, as it were, Lax now playfully calls upon Vives to speak of the little stories and trifles he has learned from his pagan readings. But Vives instead defends the Christian themes, disparaging the pursuit of poetry and eloquence, as in the *praelectio* to this piece, the *Veritas fucata*, which he composed later, and exhorting his hearers to fix their eyes on Christ and his mother.<sup>41</sup> In the Louvain edition Vives permits himself a political interpolation, heaping praise on Adrian Florensz (the future Pope Adrian VI) for his exemplary tutoring of the archduke Charles, while at the same time referring obliquely to his own refusal to become the tutor of Charles' brother, the archduke Ferdinand, after Erasmus had declined the position. At the end of the Paris and Lyons editions Vives adds an *Oblatio operis Christo et Mariae*, a solemn petition that they will accept his offering with cheerful countenance. He purposely omitted this prayer, however, in the Louvain version. It would seem that in virtue of his contacts with the more intellectual spirituality of Erasmian humanism he felt this show of piety was no longer congruent.

The last piece in the trilogy, the *Christi clypei descriptio*, is not in the form of dialogue, but is a brief epilogue added, as Vives tells us, as a Christian equivalent to the description of the shields in Homer and Vergil, since no one else had ever done it. This introductory sentence is omitted in the *Opuscula varia* of 1519, where the *Clypeus* is separated from the two dialogues and joined to another work, *De tempore in quo natus est Christus*, with a dedicatory letter to Serafin de Centelles, Count of Oliva, a counselor of King Ferdinand known for his erudition. The later version is a complete rewriting and elaboration of the early attempt. To the biblical account of the creation of man he adds a splendid line from Ovid's *Genesis*, as it

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<sup>40</sup> It occurred to me as I read this that Vives could have found an even more apt example for his purpose in chapter three of the Book of Maccabees, which recounts that as the Greek general Heliodorus was about to attack the temple of Jerusalem, a magnificently caparisoned horse blocked his way, and two young men in splendid garments appeared to him and flogged him in the sight of all.

<sup>41</sup> A strong condemnation from the *Apocalypse* (22:11) in the Paris and Lyons editions is omitted in the Louvain *Opuscula varia*: "Qui nocet ideoque noceat adhuc, et qui in sordibus est, sordescat adhuc" ("Let the evildoer still do evil, and the filthy still be filthy"). Strangely Vives does not complete the parallelism of the verse: "et qui iustus est iustificetur adhuc, et sanctus sanctificetur adhuc."

were: "He bade him stand erect and turn his face toward heaven."<sup>42</sup> In both versions he accommodates many passages from the Fourth Eclogue and *Aeneid* VI of Virgil to embellish the description of the lineage of Christ. It is a daring mixture of pagan and Christian heroes. From the scene in the Elysian fields come the verses: "Here was the ancient line of Teucer, fairest of offspring,/great-souled heroes, born in better times," with the substitution of *Christi* in the metrical position of *Teuceri*.<sup>43</sup> Vives adds many details to the Louvain edition from both the Old and the New Testament. In referring, for example, to the dispute between Peter and Paul at the Council of Jerusalem (Acts 11) he adds a phrase that seems to echo an Erasmian teaching, that true piety should not be bound up with abstinence from certain foods. After depicting early heretics on the shield he adds the Greek and Latin Fathers, and to the nations where Christianity flourishes he adds Britain, India, and the New World. He appends also one last paragraph on the biblical significance of the shield in the war against Satan.

Vives wrote a brief *praelectio* to these short works, entitled *Veritas fucata*, which accompanied them in the Lyons edition but is not in the original *Opuscula duo*. There is a bold inventiveness in the personification of truth speaking beneath the ugly camouflage that men have cast over her noble visage, whose brilliance they cannot withstand. In the dedicatory letter to Jean de Coronmeuse, abbot of the Abbey of Saint-Jacques in Liège, Vives states that he wrote it in Paris to recall certain young men from their devotion to vain, impure poetry, to Muses of more chaste inspiration. He begins the introductory lecture to his young hearers by recalling the lessons that used to be taught in those hallowed precincts of the University. In those days, the classroom rang with the names of Jupiter, Juno, Mercury, Mars, Hercules, Ithyphallus, Cupid and Venus, and similar falsities. Now at least the names of princes, Christ, and Mary can be heard. He is probably referring to poets like Fausto Andrelini, one of the more worldly members of the circle of Robert Gauguin. In 1496 Andrelini had been made royal poet by Charles VIII, and he was the author of a considerable body of licentious verse. Public readings of poetry were first allowed by the University of Paris only

<sup>42</sup> Ovid, *Metamorphoses* 1.89: "Iussit et erectos ad sidera tollere vultus."

<sup>43</sup> Vergil, *Aeneid* VI, 648–49: "Hic genus antiquum Teuceri pulcherrima proles,/Magnanimi heroes, nati melioribus annis."

in 1498, and they could be held only in the afternoon. But in Vives' eyes this new situation was pure hypocrisy, which he personifies in the figure of *Veritas fucata*, "painted truth." Vives gives a graphic picture of made-up women who try to call attention to themselves with all kinds of embellishments. His students must have been amused at the descriptions of such women fanning themselves continually so that the vermillion and white lead on their faces would not melt, and in the middle of the night being tossed out of bed by their husbands, who cannot tolerate the foul odor of their medications. But underneath this garish adornment the voice of Truth utters a long complaint. This dramatic monologue is a patchwork of scriptural quotations, mostly from the Book of Proverbs and the Book of Wisdom, but also from Aristotle and other pagan writers. She singles out the poets as the enemies of truth, quoting Jerome: "The songs of poets are the food of demons," and their standard-bearer is the blind and insane old man, Homer.<sup>44</sup> In closing she asks the philosophers who lie buried there, for whom the university was founded, to evict the poetasters and foolish men who have invaded their dwelling place.

This is certainly a harsh condemnation of classical poetry, but it must be understood in the Parisian context. Italian Neo-Latin poets had always been suspected of paganism by the northern humanists, such as Erasmus and Budé, especially the latter in his *De transitu Hellenismi ad Christianismum*. The one exception was Baptista Mantuanus, who was much more popular in the North than in his native Italy. He wrote an influential diatribe against lascivious poets, *Aureum contra poetas impudice scribentes carmen*, and his own lengthy poems on Marian themes in classicizing style were much admired. Vives' friend Macrin also wrote *De poetices abusu et virginis Mariae laudibus* probably in that same year, 1514. Always conscious of his *converso* origins, Vives would not have been tempted to go against this vogue of Christian poetry, which was in harmony with the pious sentiments instilled in him through the influence of the *devotio moderna*. Surprisingly, however, he moderated his position in a *rifacimento* of this theme many years later in the *Veritas fucata sive de licentia poetica, quantum poetis liceat a veritate discedere* (1523). It is in dialogue form, a debate between those who uphold literary fiction and those who defend Christian morality.

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<sup>44</sup> Hieronymus, *In Amos* 2.5, PL 25.1042.

The *praelectio* to the fourth book of the *Rhetorica ad Herennium* is a slight piece introducing an abortive course in rhetoric. Vives did not believe that the work was written by Cicero, but correctly regarded it as a fundamental manual of the subject.<sup>45</sup> He chose to lecture only on the fourth book, which treats of *elocutio*, not only as a refutation of Scholastic methods, but also as the proclamation of his conception of rhetoric, reducing the five parts of rhetoric to only one. *Elocutio* for him is not merely the learning of tropes and figures but rather the essence of oratory, more related to philosophy than to pedantic formulas, as he will make clear in his late work, *De ratione dicendi* (1533). In the *praelectio* he emphasizes the role of rhetoric in arousing the emotions of the hearers. The good speaker will be able to lead men's minds by the hand into a garden, as it were. As a good teacher he commends the illustrative speeches in the three styles given in the *Ad Herennium* (4.11–15) as the best approach to teaching the art of oratory. As a final admonition he quotes Cicero from the opening of the *De inventione* that wisdom without eloquence is of little profit to cities whereas eloquence divorced from wisdom was never of any avail.

The *praelectio* on Filelfo's *Convivia mediolanensia* must have been written shortly after the abandoned course on the *Ad Herennium*, to which he refers at the very beginning. Rather than accept a meager pittance, he says, he thought it better to break off the course. The explanation for his course of action is still valid:

Who does not see that it is better to teach no course at all than to have a disillusioned professor giving monotonous lectures without trying to arouse anyone's interest, including his own, which is essential?<sup>46</sup>

Vives was probably attracted to Filelfo's *Convivia* because of its encyclopedic nature and because it treated subjects in which he was particularly interested: natural and moral philosophy, astronomy, classical antiquity, history, and the advancement of universal knowledge, *de multarum ortu et incremento disciplinarum*, as the subtitle reads. One can certainly see here the same tendency to universal learning that will

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<sup>45</sup> Michael Winterbottom says of it: "There are innumerable (or at least unnumbered) complete manuscripts dating from the tenth century onwards." In *Texts and Transmissions. A Survey of the Latin Classics*, ed. L. D. Reynolds (Oxford, 1983), 99.

<sup>46</sup> *Early Writings* 2, 145: "Quis enim non videt praestare nequaquam interpretari quam, quae dicat professor nulla spe fretus, ea proferat longe frigidissima, neminem studeat movere, ne ipsum quidem, quod in primis necesse est?"

be the inspiration of the *De disciplinis*. He was undoubtedly influenced also by the fact that Bérault had published the first Paris edition of the work in 1514 for his own course on the *Convivia*. A Cologne edition of Bérault's text, published in 1537, included both Bérault's dedicatory letter and Vives' *praelectio*, which confirms the scholarly connection. Vives explains to his students that Filelfo's classical models were Gellius and Macrobius, who were imitated by the Italian humanists, Pietro Crinito in his *De honesta disciplina* and Poliziano in the *Miscellanea*, although the latter work was concerned more with philological and textual matters.

A quite remarkable composition among these early works is a dialogue whose short title is simply *Sapiens*, but whose full title in the Lyons edition is worth quoting:

Joannis Lodovici Vivis Valentini viri philosophi urbanus pariter ac gravis dialogus qui SAPIENS inscribitur, in quo sapientem per omnes disciplinas disquirens, professorum earum mores notat, denique veram sapientiam brevi sermone depingit.<sup>47</sup>

It is interesting, first of all, that he refers to himself as a philosopher, and rightfully so, although, as the dialogue unfolds, it is clear that he had great reservations about the profession and other academic callings as well. The Lyons edition presents a rather strange anomaly in the printing of the introduction to the work. It appears twice, first on the verso of the title page, where it is called a *prae-fatio*, and again on the middle of the page immediately following the preface to the *Christi Jesu Triumphus*, where it is called a *praelectio*, with the added notation that he wished it to be the proemium to the whole volume. In the first instance, it is crammed into just one page in single-space, which leads one to conclude that it was a last-minute addition. As it was being printed Vives must have sent a more correct version from Paris to replace the previous one, but since doing so would have been too expensive, the printer adopted this solution.

In the opening sentence he claims for all those who write about the corrupt morals of men the sacred duty to excoriate them. Philosophers had this privilege of old and were regarded as persons

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<sup>47</sup> "Juan Luis Vives from Valencia, philosopher, "The Wise Man," a dialogue both witty and serious, in which the author goes in search of a wise man through all the disciplines, marks the character of those who teach them, and finally describes true wisdom in a few words."



of authority and stern morals.<sup>48</sup> In his estimation satirists have been more beneficial to human existence than panegyrists (the play on words *satyrici-panegyrici* in Latin is more telling). In support of this contention he quotes a saying of Cato used by Cicero to the effect that sharp-tongued enemies have done people better service than sweetly-smiling friends, since the former often tell the truth, the latter never (*Laelius de amicitia* 80). Vives continues his vilification with references to Terence's Gnatho, archetype of the flattering parasite, and the early satirist Lucilius, who Persius tells us broke his molars on society (*Satires* 1.114–15). This is strong language for a young man to be using against the establishment. Rather than indulge in mere satire, Vives resolves to investigate these so-called teachers of truth and wisdom and to expose them for what they are, and he will not desist until he wins or dies in the attempt.

The dialogue begins with Bérault and Lax conversing about Vives' serious discussions concerning wisdom when along comes Vives himself. They decide to go in search of the wise man in the tracks of Socrates in the *Apology*, but more particularly of Erasmus in the *Praise of Folly*, which had been published in Paris just three years previously. They proceed on their way through the various faculties of the college and meet up first with a *grammaticus*, or philologist, as happens also in the *Folly*, who greets them in broken Greek as he continues grilling his student with questions like "On what day was Virgil born?" or "What kind of beard did Romulus have?" When the student responds incorrectly about the date of Virgil's birth (but the teacher gets it wrong too), he must stretch out his hand to receive a blow of the ferule, as Juvenal recounts (*Satires* 1.15).

The next encounter is with a poet reciting a pastiche of various myths in his "sacra theologia." Lax comments on his fluttering eyelids, which he says betoken an unstable mind. Employing a clever pun, he remarks that he should be more properly called *paetus*, "squint-eyed," rather than *poeta*. Taking his cue again from the *Moria*, Vives has Lax tell the poets to abandon their "studia fabularum" and turn their talents to the praise of God. They now approach the dialectician, who immediately begins to expound an incomprehensible sophism

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<sup>48</sup> Vives seems to wish to reinforce his argument here with a forced etymology, *severi, quasi verum sequentes*, as if there were some connection between *severus* and *verus*, but if there is, the *se-* would be a privative, thus giving the opposite meaning. It reminds one of the classic etymology of Isidore, *lucus a non lucendo*.

about two asses, two men, and three angels, with a third ass to be formed out of the two halves of the first two asses, and further pairings of this kind, which he will then prove are both possible and impossible with respect to the logical form (as opposed to material form) and according to the way in which the terms are accepted.<sup>49</sup> As in the *In pseudodialecticos* Vives demonstrates his facility in constructing these strange conundrums from his own training in the technique. Lax summarily brands these modern logicians as *magistros inertes* instead of *magistros in artes*.

In his meeting with the *rhetoristes*, a contemptuous term for *rhetor*, Vives indulges in a bit of self-mockery, for he refers once again to his own failed attempt at teaching rhetoric. The astrologer claims that Mercury, by whom he no doubt means Hermes Trismegistus, is wise, but when he begins to give his absurd prognostications, they move on.

In the end they go to visit a hermit in his solitary retreat. The tone of the dialogue now changes abruptly, as in the last part of the *Folly*, save that Vives finds the true wise man while Erasmus ends his discourse by preaching the folly of the Cross. The two searchers after wisdom greet the hermit with great reverence and respect: "May Almighty God be your guardian, venerable father, and when you are led into temptation, may He be with you lest you fall."<sup>50</sup> When they plead with him to speak to them of wisdom as one filled with the Holy Spirit, he answers that it is greater than any treasure, echoing the Book of Wisdom (7:8 ff.), and giving the example of the poor Socrates. He also cites pagan wisdom from a little known passage from the *Physics* of Aristotle (*Physics*, 7.3, 247b12–14). In his discussion of true wisdom and understanding Aristotle says that the

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<sup>49</sup> "Sint asini duo, homines duo, et angeli tres. Ex unius asini medietate cum alterius asini medietate tertius asinus fiat. Duo angeli cum homine uno binarium unum illorum asinorum possideant, utpote primum cum tertio copulativam, et copulative alteri angeli duo cum altero homine secundum binarium asinorum: tunc tibi copulativam probabo possibilem et impossibilem de forma et de forma acceptionis terminorum." Jennifer Ashworth kindly provided me with a logical explanation of some of the technical terms, the distinction between *copulativam* and *copulative*, and ventured an interpretation, but even she "would not go to the stake for it." She also recognized it as the kind of example that might be found in the *Termini cum principiis necnon pluribus aliis ipsius dialectices difficultatibus* of Juan Dolz, with whom Vives probably studied for a time, as mentioned above.

<sup>50</sup> Vives, *Opera omnia*, ed. Majansius, IV, 29: "Custos sit tui Omnipotens, gravis pater, et cum in tentationem fueris adductus, sit ipse tecum ne decidas."

acquisition of knowledge is not a becoming (γένησις) or an alteration (ἀλλοίωσις), but it comes about when the understanding (διάνοια) has come to rest and to a standstill. It is then that we are said to know or possess a truth. The two verbs he uses are ἠρέμειν and στήναι. The latter verb is etymologically connected with ἐπιστήμη, “knowledge,” but the first verb is more unusual. Vives obviously chose this passage because the verb suggests a connection with ἔρημος, “hermit,” although the two words are not related etymologically. It is an effective rhetorical reinforcement of his praise for the life of quiet prayer and meditation as essential to true wisdom, as opposed to the corrupt wisdom of the world.

This brief, mordant dialogue is emblematic of Vives' entire career. Not only does it express his disillusionment with the various masters in the *cyclici disciplini*, but it contains *in nucleo* his whole mission of education, which would culminate in the monumental *De disciplinis*. In the *praelectio* to the *Sapiens* he promised that if those who were supposed to be an example to others did not mend their ways, he would expose their whole way of life and make all their follies known in a longer discourse. He fulfilled this promise five years later in the *In pseudodialecticos*.

Vives' Latinity in this piece is quite audacious. He makes use of much archaic and rare vocabulary, such as the verb *antiquare*, found only in Paulus Festus with the definition “in morem pristinum reducere”; *scitulus*, a Plautine colloquial term meaning “clever”; *manticularius*, for “a thief” (in the *Folly* Erasmus had used the form *manticulator*); *crementum*, used by Varro and Valerius Maximus for the more usual *incrementum*; *ultramundanus* from Apuleius' *De deo Socratis*, *embamma*, a rare Greek word meaning a vinegar sauce, found in Columella and Pliny the Elder.<sup>51</sup> Other unusual vocabulary may either derive from the Schools or be his own invention, such as *radicatio*, *rhetoristes*, *cavillatorie*, *omniscius*.

The *praelectio* to Cicero's *De legibus* stands out from the rest of the works in the Lyons edition for its more polished style, impressive erudition and elaboration of the argument. It stands first among all the titles although it was probably written last of all. Vives obviously considered it a work of greater importance than two of the other

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<sup>51</sup> On Italian humanists' appropriations of Apuleian vocabulary, see John F. D'Amico, “The Progress of Renaissance Latin Prose: The Case of Apuleianism,” *Renaissance Quarterly*, 37 (1984), 351–92; reprinted as item II in *idem*, *Roman and German Humanism, 1450–1550*, ed. Paul F. Grendler (Aldershot, Hampshire, 1993).

*praelectiones*, the one on the *Ad Herennium* and the one on the *Convivia*, which he did not republish in the *Opuscula varia* of 1519. In this latter collection it stands together with a more imaginative presentation of the laws, the *Aedes legum*, dedicated to the juriconsult, Martín Ponce. The two versions are quite different in form, the one titled a *praelectio* and the other a *praefatio*, which results in two quite distinct texts. The second is much longer because Vives decided to add a short biography of Cicero following the traditional practice, *ex more magis quam necessitate*, as he says. On the other hand, the Lyons edition ends with a prayer to Christ and Mary that they do not desert him as he proclaims their laws (*praeconem legum vestrarum*), and that his hearers will not only discover the outer covering (*corticem*) of his words but the kernel (*medullam*).

The *praefatio* was expertly edited by the late, lamented Professor Constant Matheussen in the Teubner series, but his edition was published before the discovery of the Lyons edition.<sup>52</sup> Since the variants from that edition have never been published, I shall cite some of the more important differences between the two editions in order to illustrate how in a very few years, from 1514 to 1519, Vives' style and message evolved from the Scholastic mode to a more confident humanistic orientation. In the *praelectio* he refers to himself by the title *vir philosophus*, a designation that he insists on in order to convince his dubious hearers that a philosopher has every right to talk about law. He uses the modest verb *expono* as against the more assertive *enarro* in the 1519 edition, and also adds there that it is the role of the philosopher not only to expound but to discuss and give specific designation to the laws. The tone is much more apologetic in the first version, where he stresses his lack of professional training for this task and admits even to a certain audacity and arrogance.

He begins the formal discourse with a *divisio* of the subject, as Quintilian counsels (*Institutiones oratoriae* 1.7.20), into natural law, divine law, civil and national law. It is the first that will occupy most of his attention, as it did with Cicero. He quotes first a passage from Aristotle, which he cites as being from the first book of the *Politics* although it is actually from the *Nicomachean Ethics* (5.5.1134b), which says that natural law has the same force everywhere. It is that which we all have written in our hearts and took from our mother's womb,

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<sup>52</sup> *Ioannis Lodovici Vivis Valentini Praefatio in Leges Ciceronis et Aedes legum*, ed. Constantinus Matheussen (Leipzig, 1984).

something we cannot lay aside without losing our humanity itself (*nisi cum homine* is a rather strange but forceful expression). In the founding of cities, which man does by natural instinct, thought must be given to establish justice and peace among those who dwell there. He who will direct man to his true end by the most expeditious path, as an archer guides the arrow to the target, will deservedly be called a legislator. Vives uses the rare verb *collineare*, "to align," taken from a passage in Cicero's *De finibus*, and it is to this work that he will refer in what follows. All philosophers, however much they may disagree in other matters, are of one accord in saying that by living according to nature man will achieve the happiness that is his goal, which is attainable by all men without distinction. God would not have created a species if each member of that species did not have the same capability to be happy, otherwise He would seem to have inflicted a great wrong upon Himself.

The next section of the discourse summarizes the refutations of various philosophers concerning the *summum bonum*, following the pattern of the *De finibus*. At one point Vives inserts an interesting passage from Quintilian about man's natural propensity to virtue:

Nature has created us with a most excellent frame of mind, and it is so easy, if we have the will, to learn the better course, that, for one who reflects on it seriously the surprising thing is rather that the wicked are so numerous. After all, as water is the proper element for fish, dry land for terrestrial creatures, and the air that surrounds us for all things that fly, so it ought to be easier for us too to live according to nature rather than against it.<sup>53</sup>

This is a very sanguine attitude for Vives to adopt, since in most of his writings he has a very low regard for mankind because of the effects of the first Fall.

Now that he has explained why the investigation and knowledge of man's end is the province of the philosopher, Vives proceeds to examine the relations of the various branches of philosophy to the sphere of law. Natural philosophy concerns itself with whether the law is in conformity with nature. Moral philosophy discusses whether it is just and honest. Dialectic is the art of separating the true from the false, breaking down the whole into its parts, drawing out what is implicit, interpreting obscurities and ambiguities. He quotes Cicero's

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<sup>53</sup> Quintilian, 12.11.12–13.

praise in the *Brutus* of the great jurist, Servius Sulpicius Rufus, who joined to his vast knowledge of the law a rational and theoretical system of law.<sup>54</sup> Vives then quotes a famous eulogy of philosophy from the *Tusculan Disputations*, beginning: “You, therefore, are the guide of life; you are she who seeks out virtues and drives out vices,” to give further authenticity to his claims of philosophy in the realm of law.<sup>55</sup> In the *Praefatio*, not the *Praelectio*, he asserts his right as a philosopher to discuss law as Cicero had done in the *De legibus*.

He passes now, finally, to a discussion of that work, which in the three books that remain to us, speaks of natural law, the proper worship of the gods, and the legal institutions of a prosperous state and ideal city. Socrates, as Cicero said memorably in the *Tusculan Disputations*, brought philosophy down from the heavens to dwell with men and taught us many things about the good life, but in Vives’ view Cicero showed us the royal road that leads to man’s final goal, for which God had created him. For the young Vives no other book from pagan antiquity deserves more to be read than this work of Cicero. He quotes words from Pliny’s preface to the *Natural History*, in which he says that Cicero’s *De republica*, *De officiis*, and the consolation on the death of his daughter should be read daily and learned by heart. For Vives the *De legibus* does not yield to the *De officiis*. Both contain holy precepts and salutary teachings for one’s whole lifetime. He confesses that in reading those two books, in which he found the same teachings that were transmitted to us by the Fathers of the Church, the prophets, and Christ Himself, he was often led to wonder whether they were from the pen of Cicero, or were written by some Christian and attributed to Cicero.<sup>56</sup> What resolved his doubts was the peculiarly Ciceronian texture or style (*filium orationis*) and the numerous quotations of his works found in the Fathers themselves. As far as he is concerned, he is convinced that no human wisdom of its own powers could have attained to these teachings without God’s special favor.

<sup>54</sup> Gellius (6.1.15) tells us that Cicero himself entertained the idea of writing an *ars iuris civilis*.

<sup>55</sup> Vives, *Praefatio in Leges Ciceronis*, ed. Matheeußen, 7; Cicero, *Tusculan Disputations* 5.5: “Tu es igitur vitae dux; tu virtutum indagatrix expultrixque vitiorum. . . .”

<sup>56</sup> In his edition of the *De officiis* Michael Winterbottom supplies an *Index Ambrosianus* of all the parallels in Ambrose’s *De officiis*, 150 in all. *M. Tulli Ciceronis De officiis* (Oxford, 1994), 170–72.

In its brief compass this *praelectio* is an excellent introduction to Cicero's work, which had great influence through the Middle Ages and later. The *De legibus* is, for example, the chief source of Thomas Aquinas' discussion of natural law in the *Summa theologiae*, *Prima secundae*, QQ. 90–97. Vives would go on to vindicate the right of the philosopher to discuss law in his *Aedes legum*, published in the *Opuscula varia* of 1519. There he quotes the famous jurist Ulpian (*Digesta*, 1.1.1) as saying that the true science of law was philosophy, and making use of legal language, says that philosophy has usucaption of the law, that is, the acquisition of a title or right to property by uninterrupted possession.<sup>57</sup>

Just a few years ago another important discovery of a work by Vives from this Parisian period was made by Marcus de Schepper, rare book librarian at the Bibliothèque Royale in Brussels. While cataloguing recent acquisitions of the Erasmushuis in Anderlecht, he came across a prefatory letter of Vives to an edition of Battista Guarini's *De modo et ordine docendi et discendi*, which can be dated to March or April of 1514.<sup>58</sup> Vives hails the book's usefulness and praises its emphasis on the organization of knowledge, which is, of course, one of the distinguishing marks of his own *De disciplinis*. He says: "What is learned in a confused and haphazard manner cannot be retained or be of any benefit."<sup>59</sup>

In all of these Paris writings Vives demonstrates that the reform of education and the systematic review of universal learning was a project which was maturing in his mind from his earliest years as a teacher. His encyclopedic interests are already evident: astronomy, natural and moral philosophy, dialectic, rhetoric, law, theology. In the preface to the *De disciplinis* he pledges to follow in the path of the ancients and, like them, transmit knowledge in a clear and attractive style. As in his early works, also, he wishes to purge the arts of impious doubts and to lead them from pagan darkness into Christian light:

<sup>57</sup> *Aedes legum*, ed. Matheussen, 1.

<sup>58</sup> Marcus de Schepper, "April in Paris (1514): J. L. Vives editing B. Guarinus," in *Myrica. Essays on Neo-Latin Literature in Memory of Jozef Ijsewijn*, ed. Dirk Sacré and Gilbert Tournoy (Leuven, 2000), 195–205. For the date of the letter see Gilbert Tournoy, "The Chronology of the First Letters Written by J. L. Vives at Paris Reconsidered," *Humanistica lovaniensia*, 51 (2002), 5–8.

<sup>59</sup> "Nam quae confusaneo miscellaneoque quodam modo discuntur numquam nec retinentur nec proficiunt." His adjectives clearly recall a phrase from the preface of Gellius, "variam et miscellam et quasi confusaneam doctrinam" (*Praefatio*, 5).

If some thought they had a faint glimpse of this light, now they will think they perceive it in all its clarity; and rather than contaminating our religion with pagan errors, let us accustom ourselves from the beginning to upright and sound convictions, which will increase with the years.<sup>60</sup>

To accomplish this goal Vives is ready to challenge the definitiveness of many of the approved authors. In his confident approach to his subject material Vives is a perfect exemplification of Horace's dictum: "Nullius iurare in verba magistri."<sup>61</sup> He seems to stand in awe of no authority, living or dead, in the pursuit of his educational goals. I have tried to give but a brief orientation to some of his youthful experiments in teaching and his incipient ideas on education, which would reach full fruition in his *magnum opus*, the *De disciplinis*.

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<sup>60</sup> "Si qui maligne se illam suspicabantur videre, planius et apertius conspiciant atque illo modo quo se clarissime putent cernere, nec inter prima studia gentilicis erroribus imbuti, mox religionem illis contaminemus sed ab exordio statim rectis sanisque persuasionibus assuescamus, quae paulatim nobiscum adolescant." Vives, *Opera omnia*, ed. Majansius, VI, 6.

<sup>61</sup> Horace, *Epistles*, 1.1.14.



## CHAPTER ELEVEN

### REFORMING THE DREAM

Anthony Grafton

The intellectual armories of the sixteenth century bristled with technologies of the self. Authors and printers competed to offer bewildered country gentlemen from Norwich to Norcia advice on how to behave in polite society, make a career at court, or rule a Renaissance state. Reasonably enough, much of this how-to literature concentrated on externals and remained on the level of common sense. Giovanni della Casa and Desiderius Erasmus, who disagreed on many theological, cultural, and stylistic issues, found themselves in accord on at least one vital, non-contentious point. After sneezing, a cultivated young man should not stare at the matter expelled from his nose, as if he were a jeweler and his snot consisted of emeralds. Precepts like these, though vital to the creation of a court society, lacked drama and mystery.<sup>1</sup>

But moralists and theologians also turned inwards, forging new tools and reforging old ones with which, they claimed, their students and readers could reshape the inmost recesses of experience. Learned magicians and learned Jesuits both provided instructions for disciplining the soul's inward eye. Magicians taught their readers how to pray, fast, and utter a series of incantations, after which they could go to sleep and see the celestial palace, the majesty of God, and the nine orders of angels: a how-to manual for obtaining the beatific vision or, on a less sublime note, mastery of grammar.<sup>2</sup> Jesuits made their pupils and others undergo a long series of spiritual exercises, in the course of which they would imagine themselves standing before the Cross and hearing, seeing and smelling the tortures of the damned in Hell itself—a how-to manual for ridding oneself of one's sins and

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<sup>1</sup> See the recent study by Rudolf Bell, *How to do It: Guides to Good Living for Renaissance Italians* (Chicago, 1999).

<sup>2</sup> See the case studies collected in Claire Fanger (ed.), *Conjuring Spirits: Texts and Traditions of Medieval Ritual Magic* (Stroud, Gloucestershire, 1998).

finding a vocation, which no less a pupil of the order than René Descartes applied in a characteristically original way.<sup>3</sup> Meanwhile astrologers transformed the ancient art of crafting horoscopes into an up-to-date science of self-scrutiny. Astrologers read their own and others' charts to detect the flaws of character and body that the stars had inscribed in their nature, often displaying brutal and effective frankness—as Girolamo Cardano did when he explained the impotence that afflicted him for some ten years as the product not of witchcraft but of celestial influences.<sup>4</sup>

No area of human life harbored more mysteries, no form of experience seemed more elusive or more important, than the vivid realm of dreams. For dreamers—as the amiable seventeenth-century savant Scipion Dupleix cheerfully noted—ranged the physical and social universe.<sup>5</sup> They could fly upwards or fall downwards at any speed, moving freely and swiftly in a way impossible to waking members of a society of orders—a society in which clothing automatically revealed legal condition and economic standing, and sumptuary laws regulated the consumption of everything from beer to pie. But freedom entailed risk. The Flemish physician Levinus Lemnius vividly evoked the nightmare condition of the feverish, assailed by a wild horde of monsters, a terrifying inversion of the courtly world of leggy young men and decorous, witty women that Della Casa and Castiglione envisioned: “many imagine that they see horrid specters, lemurs, screech-owls, and harpies, and—the special plague of melancholics—cadaverous faces, harsh and gloomy countenances.”<sup>6</sup> The sleep of reason could bring forth monsters, not single spies but in battalions. Quite naturally, some of those charged with the maintenance of a healthy and moral social order set out to control the lurid beings and strange experiences that lurked in every bedroom.

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<sup>3</sup> Anthony Grafton, *Traditions of Conversion: Descartes and His Demon* (Townsend Humanities Center, Occasional Paper 22, 1999).

<sup>4</sup> Anthony Grafton, *Cardano's Cosmos: The Worlds and Works of a Renaissance Astrologer* (Cambridge, Mass., 1999).

<sup>5</sup> Scipion Dupleix, *Les causes de la veille et du sommeil, des songes & de la vie & de la mort* (Rouen, 1631).

<sup>6</sup> Levinus Lemnius, *De miraculis occultis naturae libri iiii* (Frankfurt, 1611), 215: “Sic temulentū et febricitantes absurdīs insomniis inquietari solent, adeo ut plerique horrenda spectra se videre imaginentur, lemures, strigas, harpyias, et quod melancholicis peculiare, cadaverosas facies vultusque tetricos et subtristes.”

Members of more than one profession tried to make windows in sleepers' souls. Ancient writers explained that traces of perception, remaining in the senses, formed images which the sleeper perceived, since no more powerful sensory images entered his organs of perception as he slept. Medical men, for example, drew on the ancient authority of Hippocrates and Galen to argue that disturbed sleep and wild dreams reflected a deeper disturbance in the patient's temperament.<sup>7</sup> A simple code of resemblances made clear what such dreams meant: "Many images," wrote the theologian and natural philosopher Philipp Melanchthon, "imitate the humors, since the spirits [which agitate the brain] receive their temperaments from the humors. Thus, those with excess phlegmatic humor dream that they are swimming."<sup>8</sup> Sufferers from excess yellow bile, Lemnius explained, dream of massacres, fires, and battles; sufferers from excess blood, of feasts, games, and erotic experiences.<sup>9</sup> The wise physician could read such dreams as litmus tests: their prevailing tone revealed the balance or imbalance of the patient's humors. Modern experience matched ancient authority: "So to dream of killing any one, or being besmeared with Blood, shews an abundance of Blood; and *Hippocrates* and *Galen* say, We may judge a man to be of a sanguine Complexion by it."<sup>10</sup>

Others—like the Neapolitan natural magician Giambattista della Porta, whom I have just quoted—took a more activist approach to sleep experiences. As the body digested food, he explained, the process of concoction sent vapors upwards through the veins into the brain, and these, after condensing, weighed upon the heart. Diet, accordingly, could affect dreams: "Hence those who eat windy meats, by reason thereof, have rough and monstrous dreams: meats of thin and small vapours, exhilarate the minde with pleasant phantasms."<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> A. Browne, "Girolamo Cardano's *Somniorum Synesiorum libri iiii*," *Bibliothèque d'Humanisme et Renaissance*, 41 (1979), 123–35.

<sup>8</sup> Philipp Melanchthon, *Commentarius de Anima* (Paris, 1540), 181: "Aut cum respondent Somnia certis humoribus, quorum redundantia aut agitatio, movet imaginationem seu spiritus: ut qui abundant vitioso phlegmate, somniant se natate"; *Liber de anima* (1553), in *Corpus Reformatorum* [hereafter *CR*], ed. C. G. Bretschneider et al. (28 vols.; Halle, 1834–60), XIII, 100: "Multae imagines imitantur humores, quia spiritus accipiunt temperamenta ab humoribus. Ut, qui abundant vitioso phlegmate, somniant se natate."

<sup>9</sup> Lemnius, *De miraculis*, 215: "Quibus vero bilis flava redundat, faces, caedes, incendia, pugnas, rixas, iurgia mente concipiunt."

<sup>10</sup> Giambattista della Porta, *Natural Magick* (London, 1658; repr. New York, 1957), ed. Derek J. de Sola Price, 220 (VIII.3).

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*

The prudent medical man, accordingly, would prescribe a particular regimen, with the goal of producing a particular kind of dream:

That we may not please the Sleepers onely, but also the Waking, behold:

*A Way to Cause Merry Dreams.*

When you go to bed, to eat Balm, and you cannot desire more pleasant sights then will appear to you; Fields, Gardens, Trees, Flowers, Meadows, and all the Ground of a pleasant Green, and covered with shady Bowers; wheresoever you cast your eyes, the whole World will appear pleasant and Green. Bugloss will do the same, and Bows of Poplar; so also Oyl of Poplar. But

*To make dark and troublesome dreams,*

we eat Beans; and therefore they are abhorred by the Pythagoreans, because they cause such dream<s>. Phaseoli, or French Beans, cause the same: Lentiles, Onyons, Garlick, Leeks, VVeedbine, Dorycnium, Picnocomum, new red VVine; these infuse dreames, wherein the phantasms are broken, crooked, angry, troubled: the person dreaming will seem to be carried in the Air, and to see the Rivers and Sea flow under him; he shall dream of misfortunes, falling, death, cruel tempests, showers of Rain, and cloudy dayes; the Sun darkned, and the Heavens frowning, and nothing but fearful apparitions.<sup>12</sup>

Later writers agreed that a carefully chosen diet could shape one's experiences while asleep. Dupleix also advised against the drinking of heavy red wines, for example, as likely to cause nightmares—though he admitted, to his own surprise, that the citizens of his own pleasant provincial city could sit up late, eat heavy meals and drink their powerful red wines, and still sleep the sleep of the just. Still later, Robert Burton advised readers who suffered from “fearful and troublesome dreams” that “the best remedy is to eat a light supper, and of such meats as are easy of digestion, no hare, venison, beef, &c.”—as well as to follow Della Porta's counsel and forego beans, peas, lentils and “black wines.”<sup>13</sup> Apparently, authoritative medical research had devised rules that held the realm of dreams under firm control.

In reality, of course, the location of authority was not so clear—and the wild potential of dreams not fully restrained. In the first—but not the second—edition of his *Natural Magic*, Della Porta made clear that his confidence in being able to control the dream realm did not rest only on the study of medical classics. He had spoken,

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, 220–21.

<sup>13</sup> Robert Burton, *The Anatomy of Melancholy*, ed. Holbrook Jackson (New York, 2001), II.ii.5, II.v.1.6.

he explained, to a number of witches, who composed an unguent out of the fat of boys and other ingredients, and rubbed it vigorously on their skin, so that it entered the pores. This strengthened the power of their imagination, so much so that they believed they could travel through the air on moonlit nights, enjoying dances and the embraces of handsome young men, “which they particularly desire.” Still unsure whether to credit this report, Della Porta met an old woman who promised to confirm it. He and others watched her through the cracks in a door. After rubbing her naked body with the ointment, she fell into a deep sleep during which she seemed to suffer. When awakened, she insisted that she had crossed seas and mountains, and became angry when the witnesses insisted that she had stayed in the same place throughout her vivid dream. Contradiction only made her stubborn, and more insistent that she had flown away.<sup>14</sup>

Della Porta’s confidence in the powers of his own regimen to alter dream states for the better or the worse rested, then, less on medical authority than on his having witnessed the powers of the witches’ salve in action. Popular magic, orally transmitted, made clear to him how learned medicine could and should go about its work—an argument only slightly weakened, in this context, by the fact that Della Porta probably encountered this *exemplum* in a written authority and then clothed it in colorful eyewitness detail—just as earlier writers on witchcraft, as Walter Stephens has shown, compiled evidence drawn from literary sources and pulled from victims of torture to prove that witches really did physically impossible things.<sup>15</sup> Many learned readers—

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<sup>14</sup> Giambattista della Porta, *Magiae naturalis sive de miraculis rerum naturalium libri iiii* (Lyons, 1561), 180v–82r (II.26): “Sic non illuni nocte per aera deferrī videntur, convivia, sonos, tripudia, et formosorum iuvenum concubitus, quos maxime exoptant: tanta est imaginationis vis, impressionum habitus, ut fere cerebri pars ea, quae memorativa dicitur, huiusmodi sit plena: cumque valde sint ipsae ad credendum naturae pronitate faciles, sic impressiones capessunt, ut spiritus immutentur, nil noctu dieque aliud cogitantes, et ad hoc adiuvantur, cum non vescantur nisi betis, radicibus, castaneis, et leguminibus. Dum haec pensiculatius perquirendo operam navarem: ancipitis enim immorabar iudicio, incidit mihi in manus vetula quaedam, quas a strigis avis nocturnae similitudine striges vocant, quaeque noctu puerulorum sanguinem e cunis absorbent, sponte pollicita brevis mihi temporis spatio allaturam responsa: iubet omnes foras egredi, qui mecum erant acciti testes, spoliis nudata tota se unguento quodam valde perficit. nobis e portae rimulis conspicua: sic soporiferorum vi succorum cecidit profundoque occubuit somno, foris ipsi patefacimus, multum vapulat, tantaque vis soporis fuit, ut sensum eriperet, ad locum foras reddimus, iam medelae vires fatiscunt flaccescuntque, a somno sevocata, multa incipit fari deliria, se maria montesque transmeasse, falsaque depromens responsa, negamus, instat, livorem ostendimus, pertinaciter resistit magis.”

<sup>15</sup> Walter Stephens, *Demon Lovers: Witchcraft, Sex, and the Crisis of Belief* (Chicago, 2002).

most of whom believed, as Stuart Clark has shown, that witches actually flew to their gatherings—received Della Porta’s report with skepticism or fury. Jean Bodin remarked bitterly that the author of *Natural Magic*, who “showed what means to practice” in order to share the witch’s vision, “deserves the fire.”<sup>16</sup> Della Porta replied that he had listed the ingredients of the witches’ unguent “onely in detestation of the fraudes of Divels and witches”—a feeble answer.<sup>17</sup> Sympathetic readers like Reginald Scot assumed that Della Porta had tried this piece of experimental sleep research in order to give a materialist explanation for some of the phenomena associated with witchcraft.<sup>18</sup> Like that much later collector of the lore of flying, Carlos Castañeda, Della Porta found himself at once prized by ordinary readers and denounced by professionals. The realm of medically regulated dreams was evidently contested. Radically different traditions of explanation and interpretation, spiritual and material, supernatural and natural, and radically different authorities, from eye-witness testimony to ancient anecdotes repeated *ad nauseam*, collided at the sleeper’s pillow.

The point is a significant one. For the general rise of technologies of the self and the specific flourishing of readings of dreams took place at a time of sharp ideological and religious conflict. In the Renaissance, as before, reports of dreams often took the form of literary conceits—like the textual critic Justus Lipsius’s nightmare, in which the Roman writers whose texts he had corrected confronted him at dawn near the Palatine hill, and denounced the injuries he and other critics had inflicted on them.<sup>19</sup> But they also took the form of political and religious prophecies, which could send tremors through Europe’s stateliest courts.<sup>20</sup> Theories of dream interpretation were sometimes elaborated in the study, with no clear reference to the wider world. Often, however, they were crafted in the heat of religious or political battle—and themselves represented powerful maneuvers.

In this paper I would like to examine, briefly, one modest campaign from the sixteenth century’s multiple wars over the dream: the one

<sup>16</sup> Jean Bodin, *De la démonomanie des sorciers* (Paris, 1587), 101v (II.5).

<sup>17</sup> Della Porta, *Natural Magick*, C2r. Cf. William Eamon, *Science and the Secrets of Nature: Books of Secrets in Medieval and Early Modern Culture* (Princeton, 1994), chap. 6.

<sup>18</sup> Stuart Clark, *Thinking with Demons: The Idea of Witchcraft in Early Modern Europe* (Oxford, 1997), 237–38.

<sup>19</sup> Justus Lipsius, *Somnium*, in *Two Neo-Latin Menippean Satires*, ed. C. Matheussen and C. L. Heesakkers (Leiden, 1980).

<sup>20</sup> Richard L. Kagan, *Lucrecia’s Dreams: Politics and Prophecy in Sixteenth-Century Spain* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1990).

waged by Martin Luther and his associates in Wittenberg, the first Protestant Reformers. Dreams mattered greatly to these men. They saw themselves as bringing about a revolution, not only in theology and Church government, but also in the lived religious experience of ordinary men and women. They cast their own thoughts about the future in a vivid symbolic language, which appealed to many readers who lacked their rigorous mastery of theology. And they regularly confronted Anabaptists and *Schwärmer* who insisted that true revelation came not from books, but from direct communication with God—which often took the form of prophetic dreams that only a connoisseur could distinguish from those of the magisterial reformers.<sup>21</sup> Luther and Melanchthon saw themselves as living in a world of signs, all of which pointed to the imminence of the end. Portents pullulated. Comets streaked across the skies, meteors fell from the clouds to earth, and monsters emerged from the wombs of women and animals.<sup>22</sup> All of these bore a freight of meaning. Luther did not accept every portent. Indeed, he made fun of the astrologers, whose pamphlets also predicted that the end was near. They could not explain why Jacob and Esau, born touching one another, were so different. More absurd still, they had inferred from the multiple planetary conjunctions that would take place in Pisces in 1524 that a second Flood would take place—only to be refuted twice, first by dry weather in 1524 and then by the massive Peasants' Revolt of 1525, which they had entirely failed to foresee. And they had fixed his own birthday in 1484, not because they knew the facts (even Luther's mother was uncertain of them) but because a great conjunction of Saturn and Jupiter had taken place then, and they wanted to associate Luther with it.<sup>23</sup> Yet Luther agreed that God inscribed his coming judgment on the heavens, in the form of comets and eclipses, and on the bodies of monstrous beings. The strange "pope-ass" washed up dead at Rome by a flood in 1495 elicited a commentary from Luther as well as Melanchthon. The ass's head that crowned a woman's body

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<sup>21</sup> See the fine survey by Hans-Jürgen Goertz, "Traüme, Offenbarungen und Visionen in der Reformation," in *Reformation und Revolution. Beiträge zum politischen Wandel und den sozialen Kräften am Beginn der Neuzeit. Festschrift für Rainer Wohlfeil zum 60. Geburtstag*, ed. Rainer Postel and Franklin Kopitzsch (Stuttgart, 1989), 171–92.

<sup>22</sup> Robin Barnes, *Prophecy and Gnosis: Apocalypticism in the Wake of the Lutheran Reformation* (Stanford, 1988).

<sup>23</sup> See now Claudia Brosseder, *Im Bann der Sterne: Caspar Peucer, Philipp Melanchthon und andere Wittenberger Astrologen* (Berlin, 2004).

symbolized the papacy's equally inappropriate rule over the Church; the elephant's hoof that served as its right hand stood for the Church's crushing of individual consciences. The very existence of this nightmare figure—which embodied the vision of a monster from the start of Horace's *Ars poetica*—showed that Antichrist was at large in the world, and suggested what would become a fruitful line of theses for Protestant university students, who could prove that the Pope was Antichrist.<sup>24</sup>

If dreamlike beings manifested God's plan for the world and expressed his displeasure with its corruption, what might dreams indicate? Dreams, after all, played a substantial part in the prophetic repertoire of the later Middle Ages and the Renaissance. Religious women from Bridget of Sweden to Joan of Arc claimed that their predictions about future religious and political events came to them in divinely inspired dreams and visions. Religious men like Jean Gerson devoted treatises to the problem of "the discretion of spirits," the determination of which dreams and visions were really divine in origin.<sup>25</sup> Humanists inherited from the ancient writers on medicine and oneiromancy a rich set of concepts that explained which dreams were meaningful, and in what sense, and an even richer set of techniques for reading future realities from present dreams. In theory, they could readily distinguish between mere "sleep events" (*enhyphnia*) and real, potentially meaningful dreams (*oneiroi*). In practice, they assumed that a "web of metaphor connects dream imagery and the real world"—and used various keys to trace the connections between dreams and the world's future in precise detail, just as analysts, centuries later, would trace connections between dreams and the dreamer's past.<sup>26</sup> Lexicographers by vocation, some humanists offered meanings for unusual dream images as easily as they did for unusual adjectives. When the future jurisconsult Alessandro d'Alessandro went to study with Junianus Maius, author of *De priscorum proprietate sermonum*, he found his master besieged by a "crowd of dreamers." The humanist, who was "brilliant at divining the true sense of all sorts," explained

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<sup>24</sup> See the classic study by Aby Warburg, "Heidnisch-antike Weissagung in Wort und Bild zu Luthers Zeiten," in *Aby Warburg. Die Erneuerung der heidnischen Antike; kulturwissenschaftliche Beiträge zur Geschichte der europäischen Renaissance [Gesammelte Schriften, Studienausgabe, Erste Abteilung, I.2]*, ed. Horst Bredekamp, Michael Diers and Kurt Forster (Berlin, 1998), 459–81.

<sup>25</sup> William A. Christian, Jr., *Apparitions in Late Medieval and Renaissance Spain* (Princeton, 1981).

<sup>26</sup> S. R. F. Price, "The Future of Dreams: From Freud to Artemidorus," *Past & Present*, 113 (November, 1986), 3–37, at 13. Further important studies of the tradition



and defined “the enigmas of their dreams,” not briefly and obscurely but as fully and clearly as if they were so many texts. He helped many of his clients to avoid death or suffering.<sup>27</sup>

Sometimes, to be sure, even a nightmare was just a dream. Cicero had pointed out long before that strong impressions from ordinary conversation could shape dreams. Accordingly, the Tübingen professor Joachim Camerarius ascribed one night that he spent tormented by horrid dreams to the fact that he had foolishly read Giovanni Francesco Pico’s eery dialogue on witches, the *Strix* (Hoot-Owl), before going to bed.<sup>28</sup> But others in Luther’s larger circle of acquaintances and supporters saw their dreams as prophetic. Albrecht Dürer, for example, recorded with equally painstaking attention a rain of crosses from the sky in 1505 and a terrifying dream of floods, twenty years later. It seems never to have occurred to him that the enormous pamphlet literature on the predicted flood of 1524 probably inspired the latter. Instead, he took it as a formal prophecy of the end of the world.<sup>29</sup> Alessandro—like many humanists—thought it clear that Junianus Maius was interpreting visions every bit as true and revelatory as his favorite Latin texts, and noted as confirmation that he had often witnessed men and women of the simplest sort who

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of oneirumancy and of the manuals that transmitted the protocols of the art include Maria Mavroudi, *A Byzantine Book on Dream Interpretation: The Oneirocriticon of Achmet and its Arabic Sources* (Leiden, 2002); Peter Dinzelbacher, *Vision und Visionärliteratur im Mittelalter* (Stuttgart, 1981); and Sophie Jama, *La nuit de songes de René Descartes* (Paris, 1998).

<sup>27</sup> Alessandro d’Alessandro, *Genialium dierum libri sex* (2 vols.; Leiden, 1673), I, 81–82 (I.11): “Junianus Maius conterraneus meus, vir bene literatus, in exquirendis adnotandisque verborum et sententiarum viribus multi studii fuit: et praeterquam quod in erudiendis juvenulorum animis imbuendisque doctrina pueris castigatissimae disciplinae, somniorum quoque omnis generis ita verus conjector fuit, ut prius responsa, divina fere monita haberentur. Ad eum memini, cum puer adhuc essem, et ad capiendum ingenii cultum frequens apud eum ventitarem, quotidie somniantium turbam, hominesque celebri fama et multi nominis, de somniis consultum venisse. Declarabat definiebatque ille, non breviter aut subobscura, ut plerique, sed exposite atque aperte aenigmata somniorum, sive boni, sive mali praenuncia: ita apte, ut iudicium factum a veridico diceret. Multi quoque illius monitu vitae interitum, nonnunquam animi aegritudines vitarunt.”

<sup>28</sup> Plutarch, *De natura et affectionibus daemonum libelli duo*, ed. Joachim Camerarius (Leipzig, 1576), a2v: “Extatque liber cuiusdam titulo Mallei maleficarum, et Francisci Pici alter de Strigibus, in quibus huius generis exempla et plurima numero et factis teterrima leguntur. Atque ego me aliquando paulo antequam cubitum irem librum Pici percurrerem, memini noctem illam habuisse valde gravem et difficilem, observantibus animo terroribus variis de iis quae ibi referuntur.”

<sup>29</sup> Jean Michel Massing, “Dürer’s Dreams,” *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, 49 (1986), 238–44.

grasped the meanings of their dreams “without any interpreter” and avoided disaster by doing so. The fact that Alessandro claimed confirmation from the realm of experience, as Della Porta would, for what might otherwise be dismissed as airy-fairy book learning, shows how seriously this professional interpreter of the *Corpus juris* took the interpretation of dreams.<sup>30</sup>

Some of the German thinkers who brought the texts and traditions of Italian neo-Platonism into the Holy Roman Empire were particularly explicit about their belief in dreams. Johannes Trithemius, Benedictine reformer and magus, literary historian and forger, traced his career back to a dream in which a young man had appeared to him and offered him the choice between pursuing letters and pursuing symbols.<sup>31</sup> He also wrote warmly of his teacher Libanius and his teacher’s teacher, Pelagius the hermit, both of whom composed treatises on the *ars notoria*.<sup>32</sup> And in his answers to eight questions about demons and magic posed by the Emperor Maximilian, he made clear that he had witnessed more than one unconscious but inspired person enjoying a nocturnal adventure:

When I was studying letters as a boy, four of us were sleeping in the same bed one night. One of my comrades rose from my side, as he regularly did when he dreamt, eyes closed, and walked about the house, as if awake, as the full moon shone in. He climbed the walls more agilely than a cat. He also crossed the bed, still asleep, a second and a third time. He stepped on us, but we didn’t feel any more weight than if he had been a little mouse. Wherever his sleeping body moved, suddenly all the doors opened for him. With great speed, he passed to the highest garrets in the house, and perched on the roof like a sparrow.<sup>33</sup>

<sup>30</sup> D’Alessandro, *Genialium dierum libri sex*, I, 82–83.

<sup>31</sup> Nikolaus Staubach, “Auf der Suche nach der verlorenen Zeit: Die historiographischen Fiktionen des Johannes Trithemius im Licht seines wissenschaftlichen Selbstverständnisses,” in *Fälschungen im Mittelalter: internationaler Kongress der Monumenta Germaniae Historica, 16.–19. September 1986* (6 vols.; Hannover, 1988–90), I, 263–316.

<sup>32</sup> Jean Dupèbe, “Curiosité et magie chez Johannes Trithemius,” in *La curiosité à la Renaissance*, ed. Jean Céard (Paris, 1986), 71–97.

<sup>33</sup> Johannes Trithemius, *Liber octo quaestionum* (Cologne, 1534), D2v–D3r: “Cum prosequeretur adolescens studia literarum, in uno lecto quatuor eramus nocte quadam dormientes. Surrexit e latere meo coevus et dormiens, ut solebat in somnis, domum oculis clausis et luna introlucente quinta decima quasi vigil circumambulabat, ascendit muros, et aelurum agilitate sua vincebat. Lectum quoque secundo et tertio sopitus transcendit, calcavit nos pedibus omnes, nec magis sensimus pondus, quam si mus nos contigisset exiguus. Quocunque dormiens corpus movebatur, subito ianuarum omnes ultra aperiebantur clausurae. Altiora domus aedificia velocissime penetravit et more passeris haerebat in tectis. Visa loquor non vaga relatione audita.” In his copy, Cambridge University Library H\* 15.9 (F), John Dee comments here: “Mirandum.”

“I am describing things that I have seen,” he assured the emperor, “not things that I heard vaguely described.”<sup>34</sup> Trithemius’s disciple Henry Cornelius Agrippa inserted a long and precise chapter on prophetic dreams into what became the learned magician’s desk reference for the next two centuries, his *De occulta philosophia* of 1533.<sup>35</sup>

How then did the Reformers treat dreams? In Spring 1533, Luther remarked to his disciple Veit Dietrich, in a characteristic mixture of Latin and German, that dreams could reflect the influence of supernatural powers:

This is where dreams come from. Man’s spirit can’t rest, for Satan is there even when a man is asleep, though angels are also present. The devil can so frighten me that sweat pours from me in my sleep.<sup>36</sup>

Luther admitted that the devil had “put such thoughts in my own head that I ran away from it.”<sup>37</sup> Such troubled dreams, he thought, clearly came from Satan, “since everything that serves death and terror and murder and lies is the devil’s handwork.”<sup>38</sup> And he located these struggles not in the famous study in the Wartburg where he hurled his ink-pot at Satan, but in the bedroom where he slept with his wife: “The most severe bouts I have had with him I had when I was in bed at my Katy’s side.”<sup>39</sup> Devil and angel struggled by the sleeper’s head, each desperate to gain access to his ear trumpet, and his most vivid dreams were their handiwork.

Yet Luther refused to see the supernatural origin of dreams as reason to take religious guidance from them—even from those that did not come from Satan: “I don’t pay attention,” he told Dietrich, “to either dreams or signs. I have the Word, and I let that suffice.”<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>35</sup> Henry Cornelius Agrippa, *De occulta philosophia libri tres*, ed. V. Perrone Compagni (Leiden, 1992), 556–60 (III.56).

<sup>36</sup> Martin Luther, *Works*, ed. Jaroslav Pelikan et al. (55 vols.; St. Louis, 1955–86), LIV: *Table Talk*, tr. Theodore G. Tappert, 89–90. Luther, *Tischreden* (6 vols.; Weimar, 1912–21), I, 232 (#505): “Somnia inde fiunt: Animus humanus kan nit rugen, so ist Satan auch bey m schlaffenden menschen, sed es sind Engel auch dabey. Der Teuffel kan mich so engsten, das mir der schweys im schlaff ausgeht.”

<sup>37</sup> Luther, *Works*, LIV, tr. Tappert, 90; *Tischreden*, I, 233: “Saepe me abegit ab oratione und hat mir solch gedanken eingoffen, das ich bin davon geloffen.”

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*: “. . . quia alles, was zum tod und schrecken, zu mord und lügen dienet, das ist des Teuffels handwerck. . . .”

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*: “Die besten kempff, die ich mit ihm gehabt hab, hab ich in meynem bett gehabt an meiner Kethen seyten.”

<sup>40</sup> Luther, *Works*, LIV, tr. Tappert, 90; *Tischreden*, I, 232: “Ego nec somnia nec signa curo. Ich habs verbum, da las ich mir an gnugen.”

Indeed, he even seemed to show some skepticism about divine dreams—though the contradictions in his remarks reveal the struggle they must have cost him:

I don't want an angel to come to me. I wouldn't believe him now anyway, although the time may come when I would desire it in special circumstances. I don't say that dreams and signs are of value at other times, nor do I care, for we already have everything we should have in the Scriptures.<sup>41</sup>

The apostle of *sola Scriptura* insisted that he had no need of special revelation—so little, in fact, that he prayed to God *not* to send him dreams.<sup>42</sup>

Luther's declaration had its puzzling side. For Scripture itself, as no one knew better than he did, attested to the possibility of divinely inspired dreams. And Luther spent much of his life lecturing and writing about the Bible. In his commentaries on *Genesis*, for example, he had to discuss at length Jacob's dream of the ladder and Pharaoh's dream of the seven fat and seven lean cattle. He treated them as a lesser form of vision. Their cause was natural, but their content came from above. Luther freely admitted that God often revealed future events to the godly patriarchs in this way.<sup>43</sup> And he cited the apparently "true dreams" recorded by Augustine in his letters and in the *Confessions*.

How, then, could one know which dreams deserved belief, and which of them diabolically deceived the faithful? Luther offered fairly precise rules. He divided dreams into "political or private" and "ecclesiastical," each of which had its "own type and form" and "must be referred to [its] own class."<sup>44</sup> Political dreams, he argued, were dreamt only by those who had a vocation to dream them: pagan rulers as well as Christian ones. Even these could be diabolical in origin.

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<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*: "Non vellem venire ad me Angelum: ich glaubt im doch nit igt, sed es mocht die zeit kommen in sonderlichen sachen, das ichs betet. Somnia autem et signa alias non dico valere nec curo, quia wir haben schon in scriptura, was wir haben sollen."

<sup>42</sup> Luther, *Tischreden*, I, 382: "Oravi Deum, ut non det mihi somnia, quae sunt valde dubia et fallacia, deinde neque ostendat signa sive Angelos, quia ich kan irer nicht gewarten, neque etiam opus eorum habeo, quandoquidem Deus dedit mihi verbum suum, quod nunc habeo; huic ego adhaerebo et credam." A similar remark appears at III, 157.

<sup>43</sup> Luther, *Works*, III, 11; *Werke*, XLII, 556.

<sup>44</sup> Luther, *Works*, V, 236; *Werke*, XLIII, 591: "Sic igitur distinguemus inter somnia. Quaedam sunt politica vel privata, hoc est privatarum vel publicarum rerum somnia. Haec habent suum genus et suas species, ideo in suum ordinem referenda sunt. Neque de iis hoc loco dicemus. Quaedam somnia sunt, de quibus scriptura sancta loquitur, pertinentia ad res Ecclesiasticas et aeternas. Haec vero somnia sunt, de quibus hic dicendum est."

Julius Caesar's dream that he had sex with his mother, recorded by Suetonius, "was shown to him by Satan, who is God's ape. Therefore the interpreters took it as referring to the civil war with which he afflicted his fatherland."<sup>45</sup> God often prevented such diabolic dreams from reaching fulfillment, by sending an outcome different than the one the dream seemed to predict—as Pompey, for example, thought his dream of being applauded in a theater meant that he would triumph in civil war, but in fact was dreaming only of the associates who egged him on.

Ecclesiastical dreams, by contrast, could be divine, if they met certain tests. They "must not be vague and vanishing images or thoughts but must have an analogy with the present state of affairs," and "they should move the heart in such a way that the dreamer is troubled and disturbed."<sup>46</sup> Dreams of this sort—dreams which left an indelible moral and emotional impression behind—could be true. But even they provided valid revelations only if their interpretation, as well as their content, was divinely supplied. Joseph, Luther argued, could never have interpreted Pharaoh's dreams by reason alone. In Scripture, he pointed out, "cows often designate nations, cities, or magistrates." Joseph could reasonably "have taken the seven fat cows to mean seven provinces or cities, and vice versa." Only the illumination of the Holy Spirit had enabled him to ignore this obvious "political" explanation and offer the correct one, which Pharaoh's experts had missed.<sup>47</sup> Like Gerson and other late medieval theologians, Luther insisted that visionaries deserved credence only when their own condition, the contents of their revelations, and the signs that accompanied them all bore them out. As Joan of Arc's judges demanded to know

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<sup>45</sup> Luther, *Works*, VII, 121; *Werke*, XLIV, 388–89, at 388: "Iulius Caesar somniaverat se stuprasse matrem, illud somnium monstratum ei fuit a Sathana, qui est simia Dei. Interpretes igitur retulerunt ad bellum civile quo adflixit patriam."

<sup>46</sup> Luther, *Works*, V, 237; *Werke*, XLIII, 592: "Nihilominus tamen constat immitti somnia etiam prophanis hominibus, quae sunt vera, et habent congruentes significationes. De his certas regulas tradiderunt. Primum non sint vagae et evanidae imagines sive cogitationes: sed habeant analogiam ad rem praesentem. Deinde ita moveant animum, ut somnians angatur et turbetur."

<sup>47</sup> Luther, *Works*, VII, 150; *Werke*, XLIV, 410: "Non inepte igitur septem provincias vel civitates opulentas, per septem vaccas pingues, et econtra intellexisset. Atque haec politica expositio est, cui et theologica addi potest, ita ut bos doctorem in Ecclesia, vaccae autem populum vel sacrificium denotent. Sed quis iudicabit ultra sententia sit propria, genuina et certa? cum tamen spiritus propheticus non debeat esse equivocus, nec deceat eum ambigue loqui, sed proprie et univoce, ita ut certi aliquid statuatur. Itaque nemo hoc suo ingenio et sagacitate deprehendisset, septem vaccarum visionem oeconomice accipiendam esse. Hoc solius Spiritus Sancti opus fuit, illustrantis cor Ioseph. . . ." Cf. also *Tischreden* IV, 315: "Pauci sunt Ioseph et Daniel."

what signs confirmed her dreams and visions, so Luther demanded what signs confirmed all others. Over and over again he used his direst colors to portray the devil, listening in at court for decades, examining the way young princes were brought up, and only then framing deceptive dreams for princes and *post factum* interpretations for them.<sup>48</sup> The apostle of *Sacra Scriptura* and the direct study of the biblical text found his surest tools for dealing with the dream in the works of the very medieval theologians he denounced.

Luther, who set out to recreate the Church on the basis of Scripture alone, hoped to rebuild the schools and university on a new basis, in which Pliny, rather than Aristotle, served as the chief authority. But his best friend and collaborator Philipp Melanchthon, who actually designed the Protestant Gymnasium and university, followed much more traditional paths than Luther had envisioned. The school curriculum remained classical, the university retained Aristotle, and Melanchthon himself, though an able and original theologian, lectured on core Aristotelian texts as actively as his colleague taught the Bible.<sup>49</sup> Melanchthon, accordingly, attacked the topic of dreams not as an exegete of Scripture but in the course of his university lectures on Aristotle's *De anima*. He inhaled the whole spate of humanistic dream literature that Luther rejected. And he took, at first, a far more sympathetic view of them than Luther had.

Melanchthon began his account of dreams by invoking Homer, who "elegantly played on the two gates of dreams," one of horn and one of silver, which admitted false and true dreams to the world.<sup>50</sup> Like Luther, he explained dreams physically, as an "imagination created in

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<sup>48</sup> Luther, *Works*, VII, 121; *Werke*, XLIV, 388: "Diabolus est potens et mirabilis spiritus, qui potest tam vigilantes quam dormientes fallere, et interdum quidem somnia et explicationes ipsius sortiuntur suos eventus, interdum vero non. Quia oriuntur ex causis praeiacentibus: Videt viginti aut triginta annis consilia et deliberationes in aula, deinde quomodo disposita sint organa corporum et animorum: itam videt educationem et institutionem principum, ingenia et mores eorum: ex his multa colligit. Sicut dux Georgius praevidebat duobus filiis suis fore oppetendam mortem se adhuc superstitie. Itaque facillime potest Sathan somnia immittere, et postea interpretationem colligere, perinde ut movet phantasias et imagines aut furores et libidines inspirat."

<sup>49</sup> Sachiko Kusukawa, *The Transformation of Natural Philosophy: The Case of Philipp Melanchthon* (Cambridge, 1995). Cf. Luther's interesting remarks on one of Melanchthon's dreams in *Tischreden*, IV, 315, and Luther to Melanchthon, 26 March 1539, in *Briefwechsel (WA)*, VIII, 397–98; Luther to Melanchthon, 14 March 1539, *ibid.*, 391, and Myconius to Luther, 3 March 1539, *ibid.*, 386–87. In *Tischreden*, IV, 315–16, Luther responds skeptically to a letter of Melanchthon's, partly embedded in his account.

<sup>50</sup> Melanchthon, *De anima commentarius*, 181: "Homerus venuste lusit de duabus Somniorum portis, quarum altera sit aditus inanium, altera significantium."

sleep, as various spirits move around the brain. These are the instruments of thoughts, and they create images."<sup>51</sup> Like Luther, too, he divided dreams into categories: physical, predictive, divine and diabolical. As a good Reformer should, Melanchthon insisted that "one must distinguish between this kind of dream and the rest, for all the others are deceptive."<sup>52</sup> And as his friend regularly did, Melanchthon insisted on the vividness and horror of diabolic dreams. The example he chose—one already familiar to us from Della Porta—showed how vivid and terrible these could be:

The fourth kind of dream is diabolical, as when devils inspire women who are witches with images of feasts and dances. Though it is established that they never depart, in their sleep they indicate their dreams of dancing with gestures and cries.<sup>53</sup>

Like Luther, Melanchthon argued that only divine dreams deserved full credence. And like Luther, he provided rules for identifying these—rules which harked back to late medieval treatises on the discernment of spirits: "Only this kind of divination is certain—that is, when God adds a testimony, so that those to whom these prophecies are revealed know that they come from God. Jacob and Joseph know that their dreams were divinely shown to them, and understand their meaning. Thus God gave Daniel a clear testimony. When Nabugodonosor forgot his dream, God showed it to Daniel, to bear witness that he was its author. Therefore this kind forms an exception to the rule that forbids us to believe in dreams."<sup>54</sup>

Yet Melanchthon wove another strand into his account. Like Luther, he drew on classical as well as biblical texts, to describe the predictive dreams of Darius and other ancients. But he saw these as potentially having a wider validity that Luther acknowledged. Aristotle, after all, argued that nature endowed some individuals with a special ability to

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<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*: "Est autem Somnium imaginatio facta in somno varie scilicet in cerebro discurrentibus spiritibus, qui sunt cogitationum instrumenta, et efficiunt simulachra."

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, 183: "Hoc genus Somniorum diligenter discernendum est a caeteris. Nam caetera omnia sunt fallacia: hoc unum genus certum est, ut postea dicam."

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, 183–84, at 183: "Quartum genus est Diabolicum, ut cum veneficae videntur sibi interesse convivis et ludis, cum saepe compertum sit eas nunquam abiisse, sed dormientes gestu et clamore Somnia convivorum et saltationum significasse. Diabolus spectra terribilia dormientibus offert. . . ."

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, 184: "Recensui genera, quibus consideratis facile est iudicari de usitata quaestione, An ex Somniis divinari possit et an fides sit habenda Somniis. Vnum genus certum est, cui soli fides habenda est, videlicet Divinum. Et divinatio certa est tantum huius generis. Cum videlicet Deus etiam addit testimonium, ut hi quibus talia

have dreams that foretold the future, as she provided others with a special aptitude for their interpretation. Melanchthon offered examples of this kind, drawing on modern, humanistic writers as well as ancient ones. Giovanni Gioviano Pontano, for example, had told the story of a soldier in Genoa who dreamed that a serpent devoured him. So he stayed home when his comrades embarked for battle on Genoese warships—only to be struck and killed, in a fight that exploded in the otherwise quiet city, by a ball from a cannon called “the Serpent.”<sup>55</sup> Melanchthon repeated this and other anecdotes, which suggested that ordinary moderns, as well as divinely chosen ancients, might see the future in dreams. And he acknowledged that the astrologers might be correct to argue that the cause of such abilities was the individual’s “temperament,” itself governed by the stars.<sup>56</sup> Melanchthon insisted that such dreams did not deserve *fides*, and that “many of them were characterized by a certain ambiguity: they show, more or less, the genus, not the species.”<sup>57</sup> Yet all his denials could not hide his belief that such conjectural predictions had a certain validity.

Only in 1553, when Melanchthon revised his work on the soul, did he free his account from these ambiguities. He eliminated his reference to Homer’s two gates, excised his references to modern dreams verified by events, and insisted that “such conjectures are deceptive, like many others based on signs.”<sup>58</sup> And he closed his account, in the new version, by describing diabolic dreams and warning that “here we must prudently avoid the snares of the devil.”<sup>59</sup>

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vaticinia monstrantur, sciant a Deo profecta esse. Iacob, Ioseph sciunt sua somnia divinitus monstrata esse, et intelligunt significationem. Ita Danieli addit Deus illustre testimonium, cum Nabugdonosor oblitus esset Somnium, id rursus ostendit Deus Danieli, ut testetur se autorem esse. Ideo hoc genus excipitur a regula, quae prohibet credi Somniis.”

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, 182: “Pontanus scribit militem Genuae somniasse, se a serpente devorari, quare eo die cum caeteri milites imponerentur navibus dimicaturi cum hostibus, ipse domi se continuit. Sed fortuito tumultu orto in urbe alioqui tranquilla, ictus globo bombardae, quam Serpentem vocant, perit.”

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, 183: “Nec repugno, siquis huius proprietatis causam esse contendet temperamenti praestantiam, ut Astrologis videtur. Sed inepti sunt, qui praecepta de interpretationibus tradunt, et causas in humorum motu quaerunt, cum quidem alii aliam habeant imagines.”

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, 184–85: “Secundi generis Somnia, etsi sunt coniecturae, tamen adfirmatio prohibita est. Quare non est eis habenda fides, ac plerunque aliqua inest ambiguitas: fere genus monstrant, non diserte speciem.”

<sup>58</sup> Melanchthon, *Liber de anima*, in *CR*, XIII, 101: “Sunt igitur fallaces coniecturae, ut aliae multae ex signis.”

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*: “Hic insidiae diaboli prudenter cavendae sunt. Et constanter repellendae sunt hae praestigiae. Sed nolo huic commemorationi diutius immorari.”



The atmosphere grew dark for dream interpretation. The important Strassburg edition of Artemidorus on dreams reworked the first version of Melanchthon's discussion, omitting his pleasant secular examples.<sup>60</sup> And Caspar Peucer, Melanchthon's son-in-law, followed Melanchthon's new line in his authoritative treatment of all forms of divination. Here Peucer formally classified dreams as natural signs, comparable to the conjunctions of the planets or the facial marks interpreted in physiognomics—God's writing on the fabric of consciousness. But he—or Melanchthon—now used the tools of humanistic philology in a new way, to attack the belief in dreams. Alessandro d'Alessandro, whom we have met as a believer in dream interpretation, drew from Pausanias the information that ancients seeking oracular dreams had wrapped themselves in the skins of sacrificial victims and spent the night in temples—and that the *lymphatica insomnia* they attracted by doing so had often found precise confirmation afterwards.<sup>61</sup> Peucer and Melanchthon cited this practice to discredit ancient dreams and dream interpreters:

Diabolic in nature are all those dreams with which the devil showed pagans once upon a time, when they spent the night at the shrines of idols, wrapped in the skins of sacrificial victims, in order to obtain these illusions—and those with which he now showers Anabaptists and other fanatics . . . or magicians and witches.<sup>62</sup>

Luther's and Melanchthon's different responses to the experience and literature of dreams reflected both individual experiences and deeper convictions. In the winter of 1521–22, Luther, at his Elector's orders, remained away from Wittenberg, working on his biblical translations at the Wartburg. Meanwhile the theologian Andreas Bodenstein von

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<sup>60</sup> Ludger Grenzmann, *Traumbuch Artemidori: zur Tradition der ersten Übersetzung ins Deutsche durch W. H. Ryff* (Baden-Baden, 1980), chap. 2.

<sup>61</sup> d'Alessandro, *Genialium dierum libri sex*, I, 844 (III.26): "Illud utique non est ab re dixisse, antiqui moris fuisse, oracula et futurorum praescientiam quibusdam exhibitus sacris per insomnia dari, qui mos talis erat, ut victimas caederent: mox sacrificio perfecto, sub pellibus caesarum ovium incubantes, somnia captarent, eaque lymphatica insomnia verissimos exitus sortiiri. Possentque pleraeque infelicitatis miseriarumque exempla referri, illorum qui quales species in somniis viderant, tales postea exitus experti didicere: quae exequi non opportunum reor."

<sup>62</sup> Caspar Peucer, *Commentarius de praecipuis divinationum generibus* (Wittenberg, 1553), 200v: "Diabolici generis sunt omnia illa, quae Diabolus olim offudit aethnicis, ubi ad delubra idolorum captandarum talium praestigiarum causa involuti victimarum pellibus cubabant: quaeque nunc Anabaptistis et similibus fanaticis in abdito ad novas patefactiones velut hiantibus, aut magis et veneficis, et promiscue omnibus non conversis ad Deum, sed suae subiectis tyrannidi exhibet, eo fine, ut caedes, flagicia ac scelera struat et stabiliat idolatriam."

Karlstadt and others at Wittenberg, including Melanchthon, began a rapid and radical transformation of the Church. They offered communion in both kinds, used German as well as Latin in the Mass, and tried to rid the city of beggars and images—two equally established elements of the Catholic order. Rapid change offended many who had sympathized with Luther’s criticisms of indulgences and other abuses. Karlstadt and his allies found even more problematic support, moreover, from three “Zwickau prophets”—men from the textile and silver-mining town of Zwickau, some 40 miles from Leipzig, who claimed that their authority came not from Scripture and scholarship, but from direct divine inspiration. Perturbed by the disturbances that ensued, uncertain where his sympathies lay, Melanchthon took no firm action.

Luther returned to the city in early March 1522, wearing his monk’s habit, and preached a brilliant series of sermons, calling for moderation and insisting that no one should be offended by mere external matters. He met the Zwickau prophets, but was not impressed. Markus Stübner’s strange language and pretense that he could read Luther’s mind did not impress the Reformer, who demanded firm signs and received only the promise that they would appear in seven years. Thomas Drechsler received an even dustier answer when he claimed the authority of a vision and a dream:

Drechsler said he had a message to him from his father. I: Who is your father? He: Jesus Christ. He’s my father too. [I:] What is his message? [He:] That God is angry with the world. I: Where did he say this to you? He: Outside the city, when I went out of the gates, I saw a little cloud, which is a sign of God’s anger. And in a dream I saw drinkers saying: It is valid! It is valid! And the hand of the Lord over them! And when one of them poured a mug of beer over my neck, I woke up.<sup>63</sup>

Beer was a serious matter to the citizens of Zwickau, whose city council had recently restricted and taxed brewing rights, causing

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<sup>63</sup> Luther, *Tischreden*, III, 2837b, 14: “Dresse dixit se nuntium habere ad eum a patre suo. Ego: Quis est tuus pater?—Ille: Ihesus Christus.—Der ist mein Vater auch! Quid nuntiat?—Deum iratum esse mundo.—Ego: Ubi tibi hoc dixit?—Ille: Extra civitatem, cum porta exirem, videbam parvam nubeculam, quae est signum irati Dei. Et in somno vidi potatores dicentes: Es gilt! Es gilt! Et manum Domini super eos! Et cum unus ex eis fudisset ein kandel pyr auff meinen halss, experrectus sum.”

shortages and high prices.<sup>64</sup> In this local context, the Zwickau prophets could see it as a symbol of divine wrath. But Luther naturally enough found Drechsler's symbolic language ludicrously inappropriate. He told the prophet not to play with the name of the Lord, and Drechsler went off angrily, saying "Anyone who doesn't say what Luther wants must be a fool!"<sup>65</sup>

Luther himself ascribed his dislike of dreams to this first experience:

I have often stated that at the beginning of my cause I always asked the Lord not to send me dreams, visions, or angels. For many fanatical spirits attacked me, one of whom boasted of dreams, another of visions, and another of revelations, with which they were striving to instruct me.<sup>66</sup>

And his early antipathy reached an even higher pitch in the 1530s, when Anabaptist prophets claimed authority from dreams and revelations for their revolutionary re-ordering of society. In his commentary on Jacob's dream, Luther made the connection clear:

the godless err in their interpretation and understanding of dreams, just as they talk nonsense when they explain signs and prodigies; for they neither observe nor have the Word. This is what happened to the Anabaptists at Münster, who had seen a bow in the clouds and next to it a bloody hand. This they seized for themselves as a sign of victory, even though destruction was threatening them, as the outcome showed. But they erred in their interpretation. . . . For they had neither the Word nor the power of the sword.<sup>67</sup>

Unofficial, modern readers of dreams could create only horrors—like the commune at Münster, which horrified all of Europe by instituting polygamy and community property, and was eventually put down with great bloodshed in 1535. No wonder, then, that Luther seized every weapon at his disposal to deprive dreams of authority—even if doing so involved him in methodological self-contradiction.

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<sup>64</sup> Susan C. Karant-Nunn, *Zwickau in Transition, 1500–1547: The Reformation as an Agent of Change* (Columbus, [1987]).

<sup>65</sup> Luther, *Tischreden*, III, 14: "Ego increpabam eum, ne cum nomine Dei luderet. Ipse autem abiens dixit: Wer nicht sagt, was der Luther wil, mus ein narr sein!"

<sup>66</sup> Luther, *Works*, VII, 119; cf. *Werke*, XLIV, 387.

<sup>67</sup> Luther, *Works*, V, 239; *Werke*, XLIII, 593: "Errant igitur impii in interpretaendis et accipiendis somniis. Sicut etiam in expositione signorum et prodigiorum hallucinantur, quia non observant, nec habent verbum. Quemadmodum Monasteriensibus anabaptistis accidit, qui viderant arcum in nubibus, et iuxta eum manum cruentatam. Id pro se arripiebant tanquam signum victoriae: cum tamen ipsis minaretur exitium, sicut exitus ostendit. Errabant autem in interpretaendo, quia non attendebant fundamentum nec vocationem. Non enim habebant verbum nec potestatem gladii. . . ."

Melanchthon began from a different standpoint. A staunch if modern Aristotelian, impressed by classical and humanist ways of dream interpretation, he took an open stance at first, trying to combine Luther's views on dreams with other, incompatible ones. Over time, he found himself compelled to agree with Luther, more and more strongly. The earliest form of his *Commentary on the Soul* already condemned the diabolic dreams of Anabaptists. By the 1550s, as we have seen, Melanchthon had sharpened and generalized his doubts about modern predictive dreams, making his rhetoric match Luther's. Yet even in its final form, Melanchthon's theory allotted a modest place to the ancient and humanistic theories that he seemed to condemn. Amid the examples of diabolic and incorrectly prophetic dreams with which Caspar Peucer stuffed his chapter on oneiromancy was the ancient tale of Sophocles. The playwright dreamt that Hercules himself revealed to him the identity of a thief who had robbed his temple, ignored the dream, and then had it again. This time he went up to the Areopagus and denounced the villain, who confessed "after being put to the question" and returned the golden dish he had stolen.<sup>68</sup> Peucer not only told the story, in these suitably anachronistic terms: he expressed no doubt about it.

The realm of dreams, in other words, proved to be a collision zone even in the narrow, fairly harmonious world of Lutheranism in its first few years of existence—a site for collisions not only between different schools and styles of interpretation, but also between a philological and a theological tradition, and between a purist and an ambivalent attitude towards ancient divination.

On the level of practice, moreover, dreams and their interpretation still played a surprisingly prominent role in Lutheran life. In 1541, as Melanchthon tried to negotiate a compromise with Catholic theologians at Regensburg, he dreamed that the German princes had ordered him to paint a hyena or monster, with the face of a virgin, burning eyes, dragons hanging from its neck like the hydra, and the hideous feet of Scylla. He refused, saying that the feet could not be painted well. Later, he described the dream in a Latin poem. And later still, he described other dreams as well—for example, one

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<sup>68</sup> Peucer, *Commentarius*, 201v: "Sophocles Tragoedus cum ex aede Herculis patera aurea gravis surrepta esset, in somniis videre visus est Deum ipsum indicantem furti autorem, quod semel ille iterumque neglexit: ubi idem saepius rediret, ascendit in Areopagum Sophocles et rem detulit. Areopagitae comprehenso eo, qui erat a Sophocle nominatus quaestioneque adhibita extorserunt confessionem furti et pateram."

he dreamt shortly before Luther's death, at a summer house in Torgau. Entering a Schloss, Melanchthon saw splendid hangings and a door. Passing through this, he found himself in a magnificent bridal bedroom. A beautiful naked woman sat waiting for him—one more beautiful than any he had seen. Naturally, he fled, and as he did, he heard her say, "Ah, Philipp, don't flee from me."<sup>69</sup> Then he woke, deeply troubled. These dreams had a clear meaning. Melanchthon, the most irenic of the Wittenberg Reformers, thought it possible to establish a list of *adiaphora*, "things indifferent," on which the Catholics and Protestants could agree to disagree. In doing so he risked—and finally, so many other Lutherans believed, lapsed into—heresy, persuaded by "dukes and Achitophels" to admit monsters into the Church.<sup>70</sup> Melanchthon's dreams recorded his disquietude about his own role in the Church.

The veracity of this record is hard to test. But it does show that, in practice if not in theory, Melanchthon continued to act as if a series of dreams might reveal the future, if read properly. Even magisterial Reformers continued to decode the dreams themselves in the most traditional way, looking for correspondences between imagined experience and later events, and assuming that these could be read off in a direct and detailed fashion, as one would explicate a text. For all their protests, all their rules, and all their efforts to stamp it out, the Reformers found themselves unable to reform the dream; found themselves, indeed, as much its captive as the many other sixteenth-century people, poor and rich, Catholic and Jewish, who scrutinized their sleep experiences in the hope of knowing what the future might bring. Even Luther recounted, in his table talk, how his wife had dreamt of handsome young men coming to take her daughters to a wedding. Melanchthon, to whom she described this dream the next day, was "darüber erschrocken," and explained that the young men represented angels coming to take the daughters to heaven. Sure enough, Luther's daughter Magdalena died that day.<sup>71</sup> What dreams might come? No one knew for certain; and no one could be sure just what they meant. Control of the world of sleep was itself a

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<sup>69</sup> "Etliche Trawm Philippi," in *CR*, XX, 685–92, at 688: "Und in dem er das köstlich Brautbette besiehet, wird er eines gar nacketen schönen weibes bildes . . . gewar. . . ."

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*, 89–92.

<sup>71</sup> Luther, *Tischreden*, V, 191.

dream, never to be realized even in those societies that most strictly regulated waking behavior. Meanwhile this study of forms of self-control is dedicated to Ronald Witt, master historian and master practitioner, as well, of one of Renaissance society's more attractive forms of self-discipline and self-formation.

PART THREE

ERUDITION AND INNOVATION





## CHAPTER TWELVE

### GEORG VOIGT: HISTORIAN OF HUMANISM

Paul F. Grendler

Ludwig von Pastor called Georg Voigt (1827–91) “the Historian of Humanism.”<sup>1</sup> This is exactly right. Voigt was the most important historian of humanism from the publication of *Die Wiederbelebung des klassischen Alterthums oder das erste Jahrhundert des Humanismus* (The Revival of Classical Antiquity; or, The First Century of Humanism) in 1859 until the detailed research and editing of Remigio Sabbadini (1850–1934), followed by the new interpretations of Hans Baron (1900–88), Paul Oskar Kristeller (1905–99), and Eugenio Garin (1909–2004) of the 1940s and 1950s. Voigt’s book was the first comprehensive scholarly study of humanism and, in its expanded editions, remains the most comprehensive study of Italian humanism for the period 1350 to 1450. It also charts the beginning of humanism in northern Europe and Spain. The book established an interpretation of humanism and raised issues which many historians still discuss. Other historians use the book for its extensive information. But because it was published the year before Jacob Burckhardt’s *Die Cultur der Renaissance in Italien: Ein Versuch* (1860), Voigt’s book is seldom given appropriate credit for its originality and comprehensiveness. Voigt himself is little known, in contrast to Burckhardt, whose life has been much studied. Voigt is a fitting subject for study in a volume honoring the author of a comprehensive study of the origins of humanism. This essay explores Voigt and his book in the context of the richness of nineteenth-century German historiography.

#### 1. *Education and Career*

Voigt was not the product of a distinguished historiographical tradition such as Leopold Ranke’s seminar at the University of Berlin.

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<sup>1</sup> Ludwig von Pastor, *The History of the Popes from the Close of the Middle Ages*, ed. Frederick Ignatius Antrobus et al. (40 vols.; London, 1891–), I (1891), 23 and 256;

Instead, he came from remote Königsberg (now Kaliningrad in Russia) in East Prussia, 670 kilometers (415 miles) northeast of Berlin. Voigt was born there on 5 April 1827, the fifth of ten children of Johannes (1786–1863) and Charlotte Voigt.<sup>2</sup> Johannes was director of the secret archive of Königsberg plus ordinary professor of medieval and modern history at the University of Königsberg, and occasional city office holder. Georg's mother was the daughter of a local merchant who put the slate roof on the city hall and whose family had originally come from Salzburg, Austria. Since his father was Lutheran, it is likely that Georg was baptized and raised in the Evangelical Church, created by the union of the Lutheran and Reformed churches in Prussia in 1817. But his religious convictions as an adult are unknown.

Because Georg was a sickly child, his father arranged for home tutoring at first. At the age of six Georg and his brother Otto, two years older, began elementary school together. They went on to the gymnasium in 1842 where Georg excelled, especially in Greek and history. He entered the University of Königsberg in 1845 in order to study law and public administration. But he switched to philology, meaning classical studies, and history. He received his doctorate in June 1851. His thesis (282 pages but unpublished), written under the direction of Wilhelm Drumann, dealt with Alcibiades (ca. 450–404 B.C.), the controversial Athenian general and politician, who unsuccessfully sought to enlarge Athenian rule abroad, fought in the Peloponnesian War, then changed sides and joined Sparta.<sup>3</sup>

Königsberg was not a famous institution. Albert, Duke of Prussia and Brandenburg, founded it as a Lutheran university in 1544. In the seventeenth century it became Reformed, i.e., Calvinist, when

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II (1906), 15. The capitalization is that of the English translation. For Pastor's use of Voigt, see below. I wish to thank the editors for the invitation to contribute to this volume and especially Kenneth Gouwens for his careful reading of this paper.

<sup>2</sup> Biographical information comes from Max Lehnerdt, "Georg Voigt," in *Biographisches Jahrbuch für Alterthumskunde*, 17 (1894), 43–68; "W," "Voigt, Georg," in *Allgemeine Deutsche Biographie*, ed. R. Freiherrn von Liliencron and F. X. Wegele (56 vols.; Leipzig, 1875–1912), XL (1896), 204; W. Erich Maschke, "Voigt, Georg," in *Altpreuussische Biographie*, ed. Christian Krollmann, Kurt Foritreuter, and Fritz Gause, II (Marburg, 1967), 759–60; Wolfgang Weber, *Biographisches Lexikon zur Geschichtswissenschaft in Deutschland, Österreich und der Schweiz: Die Lehrstuhlinhaber für Geschichte von den Anfängen des Faches bis 1970* (Frankfurt am Main, 1984), 624–25; and Wolfgang Weber, *Priester der Klio: Historisch-sozialwissenschaftliche Studien zur Herkunft und Karriere deutscher Historiker und zur Geschichte der Geschichtswissenschaft 1800–1970* (Frankfurt am Main, 1984), 561, 569. The accounts give different dates for some events in Voigt's life. Unless otherwise indicated, I follow Lehnerdt, because he knew Voigt, wrote first, and provides more information.

<sup>3</sup> Lehnerdt, "Georg Voigt," 47–48.

the rulers changed religions. By the first half of the nineteenth century Königsberg did not have professors as accomplished or well-known as the University of Berlin or some other German universities. Nevertheless, it had three ordinary professors of history with remarkable and varied publications, and Voigt studied with all three.

The most important historiographical influence on Georg inside and outside the classroom was his father. Born a Lutheran in Bettenhausen, Thuringia, Johannes initially studied theology.<sup>4</sup> But at the University of Jena he came under the influence of Heinrich Luden (1780–1847), an early Romantic patriotic historian of the German Middle Ages. Luden suggested that he study Pope Gregory VII, and Voigt did, publishing his first book, *Hildebrand als Papst Gregorius VII und sein Zeitalter*, in 1815 (second edition 1846; French translations of 1842 and 1854). Hildebrand (ca. 1020–85), a Tuscan, became Gregory VII in 1073. He began a program of clerical reform and, when opposed, proclaimed the pope to be supreme over all secular rulers and possessing the authority to depose them. When his reforms threatened imperial control over the Church in his territory, the German Emperor Henry IV (Hohenstaufen) fought back. Gregory excommunicated Henry IV in 1076, thus releasing his subjects from obedience. Henry submitted to the pope at Canossa during the winter of 1076–77, but overall got the better of the pope. Nevertheless, fictional images of Henry kneeling in the snow before the pope symbolized for many Germans an overweening and anti-German papacy centuries after the event. Voigt's book, the first critical study of Gregory, portrayed him as a great reformer worthy of respect. But readers from Protestant circles severely criticized the book.<sup>5</sup> Voigt followed this with another work on medieval Italy: *Geschichte des Lombarden-Bundes und seines Kampfes mit Kaiser Friedrich dem Ersten: Aus den Quellen dargestellt* (Königsberg, 1818), a substantial study of the Lombard League and its struggle against Emperor Frederick I (ca. 1123–90).

Johannes Voigt arrived in Königsberg in 1817 to become director of the state archive. He was also extraordinary professor of medieval history at the University of Königsberg from 1817 through

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<sup>4</sup> K. Lohmeyer, "Voigt, Johannes," *Allgemeine Deutsche Biographie*, XL, 205–10; Erich Maschke, "Voigt, Johannes," in *Altpreuussische Biographie*, II, 760–61; Weber, *Biographisches Lexikon*, 625–26.

<sup>5</sup> In addition to the works previously cited, see G. P. Gooch, *History and Historians in the Nineteenth Century* (New York, 1949; first pub. in 1913), 72–73; and James Westfall Thompson, *A History of Historical Writing* (2 vols.; New York, 1942), II: *The Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries*, 140–41.

1822 and ordinary professor of medieval history from 1823 until his death. The archive housed the records of the Teutonic Knights, who founded Königsberg and ruled Prussia from the mid thirteenth century until 1525. In the 1520s Albert (1490–1568), margrave of Brandenburg-Ansbach and grandmaster of the Teutonic Knights, initiated the steps which secularized the order and made himself duke of Prussia and Brandenburg. The records of the Teutonic Knights became the foundation for the book for which Johannes Voigt is best remembered, *Geschichte Preussens von den ältesten Zeiten bis zum Untergange der Herrschaft des deutschen Ordens*, a history of Prussia from ancient times to 1525, published in nine volumes between 1827 and 1839.<sup>6</sup> His fame as the first significant historian of medieval and Reformation Prussia and his considerable scholarly production have earned Johannes Voigt a larger place in the history of nineteenth-century German historiography than his son enjoys. Biographical articles of Johannes are five to seven times as long as those for Georg. Surveys of nineteenth-century German historiography usually mention Johannes but ignore Georg.<sup>7</sup>

Despite his concentration on Prussia, Johannes Voigt did not lose interest in Italy. In 1833 he published a 140-page article on the fifteenth-century papacy.<sup>8</sup> The article uses the diplomatic reports of ambassadors of the Teutonic Knights to the papacy in order to present considerable information about finances, politics, councils, per-

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<sup>6</sup> Johannes Voigt, *Geschichte Preussens, von der ältesten Zeiten bis zum Untergange der Herrschaft des Deutschen Ordens* (9 vols.; Königsberg, 1827–39; reprint, Hildesheim, 1968). Gooch, *History and Historians*, 73, judges it to be overly favorable to the knights.

<sup>7</sup> The biographical article for Johannes in *Allgemeine Deutsche Biographie* has 182 lines, while that of Georg has 27. The biography of Johannes in *Altpreuussische Biographie* has 166 lines, that of Georg 32 lines. Gooch mentions Johannes Voigt once (73) and ignores Georg. Thompson, *History of Historical Writing*, mentions Johannes twice (141, 166). But, ironically, the index entry is to Georg. His one mention of Georg (191) is a mistake.

<sup>8</sup> Johannes Voigt, “Stimmen aus Rom über den papstlichen Hof im funfzehnten Jahrhundert,” *Historisches Taschenbuch*, 4 (1833), 45–184. An annual serial founded in 1830 by Friedrich Ludwig Georg von Raumer (1781–1873), a prominent historian of the German Romantic school, who was also its first editor, and published in Leipzig, *Historisches Taschenbuch* was the first German historical review. It published a very wide range of articles; for example, the 1833 volume includes a long article on the painter Peter Paul Rubens. It ceased publication after 1892. On Raumer and the *Historisches Taschenbuch*, see Thompson, *History of Historical Writing*, II, 144–46. Voigt’s article is very sparing in its references. He often quotes from documents in the archive of the Teutonic Knights in Königsberg without giving references. The practice of adequate documentation made a major leap forward with Pastor.

sonalities, and Germans at the papal court, especially during the pontificates from Martin V through Paul II (1417–71). Pastor cited the work and several times quoted the diplomatic reports that Voigt unearthed.<sup>9</sup> It is very likely that his father's scholarship first stimulated Georg's interest in Renaissance Italy, a field very different from those cultivated by the vast majority of German historians of the generations of both Johannes and Georg.

Georg Voigt also studied with the other two ordinary professors of history at the University of Königsberg. Both were well-published historians of eclectic interests. He wrote his doctoral thesis under the direction of Wilhelm Drumann (1786–1861), extraordinary professor of ancient history from 1817 to 1821, then ordinary professor of ancient history from 1821 to 1856. Drumann published several works in ancient history, including a six-volume history of the Roman Republic, a study of Egypt's Rosetta stone, and a book summarizing references to workers in various occupations and to communists and theories of communism in ancient Greece and Rome. He also published a study of Pope Boniface VIII (d. 1303).<sup>10</sup> The third historian was Friedrich Wilhelm Schubert (1799–1868), extraordinary professor of modern history from 1821 to 1825, and ordinary professor of modern history from 1826 until his death. Schubert's primary research was on the philosopher Immanuel Kant (1724–1804). Born in Königsberg and never leaving, Kant taught at the university as an unsalaried lecturer dependent on student fees from 1755 to 1770, then as an ordinary professor of philosophy from 1770 to 1790. Schubert co-edited Kant's works in 12 volumes between 1838 and 1842, and wrote a biography of Kant and several studies of his writings. He also published works in ancient history and a substantial study of the Teutonic Knights.<sup>11</sup>

In addition to his studies, Georg accompanied his father on research trips. In the summer of 1850 Georg joined his father on a trip to

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<sup>9</sup> Pastor, *History of the Popes*, I, 241, 243, 245, 262; II, 48, 85–86. I have not examined subsequent volumes for references to Voigt's article.

<sup>10</sup> For a biographical notice, see Weber, *Biographisches Lexikon*, 114–15, with further bibliography. Wilhelm Drumann, *Die Arbeiter und Communisten in Griechenland und Rom. Nach den Quellen* (Königsberg, 1860; reprint, Amsterdam, 1968). For a partial list of his works, see the catalogue of any major university library.

<sup>11</sup> For a biographical notice, see Weber, *Biographisches Lexikon*, 536, with additional bibliography. For a partial list of his works, see the catalogue of any major university library.

archives in southern Germany.<sup>12</sup> Then in 1853 Georg and his father took an extended research and tourist trip. By this date Georg had apparently decided to become an historian, but not in ancient Greek history, and to study Aeneas Silvius Piccolomini (1405–64). The humanist Piccolomini spent much time in Germany, including service in the chancery of Holy Roman Emperor Frederick III, before becoming Pope Pius II in 1458. Departing Königsberg at the end of May 1853, they first went to Berlin, Halle, Weimar, and Jena. In every town they visited the library, the archive, and professors, if the town had a university. Father and son next visited Bamberg, Nürnberg, and Munich. In Munich Georg found numerous manuscript letters of Piccolomini. The pair went on to Salzburg, Ischl, Linz, and Vienna. They finished their research in Vienna on 28 August, and continued to Graz, Laibach, Trieste, and Venice. His arrival in Venice was “his first entrance into Italy,” according to the writer of his obituary, and it made a deep impression.<sup>13</sup> Georg felt a profound empathy for Italy, according to his diary of the trip. They went on to Verona, then turned north to Innsbruck, Stuttgart, and Prague, visiting libraries all the way. They returned to Königsberg in October. In the course of his trip Georg found some 200 unpublished letters of Piccolomini. The long research and tourist journey undoubtedly confirmed his decision to study Piccolomini and possibly inspired him to write *Die Wiederbelebung*. But whether he made other trips to Italy is unknown.

The author of Voigt’s obituary sees the influence of the two most famous historians of the most famous university in Germany on the dissertation and early scholarship of Voigt.<sup>14</sup> Founded in 1810, the University of Berlin quickly became the most important and influential center for historical scholarship in Germany and Europe. Barthold Georg Niebuhr (1776–1831) taught ancient history from the founding of the university, and Leopold von Ranke (1794–1886) arrived in 1825 to lecture and conduct his famous seminar. The students of Ranke, and the students of his students, dominated German historical scholarship in the nineteenth century and beyond. They held positions in prominent universities and founded journals, historical societies, and the *Monumenta Germaniae Historica*.

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<sup>12</sup> Lehnerdt, “Georg Voigt,” 47, 50–51.

<sup>13</sup> Lehnerdt, “Georg Voigt,” 51, refers to “der erste Eintritt in Italien” of Voigt, but says nothing about other visits to Italy.

<sup>14</sup> Lehnerdt, “Georg Voigt,” 48.

Any influence from Niebuhr and Ranke did not endure. Because Voigt's thesis on Alcibiades is not available, Niebuhr's possible influence on it cannot be assessed. Voigt wrote nothing more on ancient history. And Voigt's scholarship was very different from that of Ranke and his disciples. Most historians who studied at Berlin wrote political and diplomatic histories and had little interest in intellectual history. (Jacob Burckhardt is the obvious exception.) They wrote histories of nations. Later students of Ranke, and students of students, increasingly concentrated on German history from the Middle Ages onward. Some wrote historical works which promoted what they saw as German national interests. Voigt did none of this.<sup>15</sup>

Georg Voigt was the product of a provincial university, none of whose historians had studied at Berlin. But they had broad cosmopolitan interests and, in the case of Drumann, took ideas seriously. Johannes Voigt, who undoubtedly had the greatest influence on Georg, had an independent mind and was willing to investigate new topics and venture contrary views. It could be argued that Georg Voigt had the benefit of escaping Berlin's influence. Instead of becoming one more historian of German politics and institutions, he blazed an original historiographical path. Most important, Voigt's training and career far from Berlin demonstrates how rich and diverse was the nineteenth-century German historiographical tradition.

Georg Voigt became second custodian of the university library in 1852, or 1854, or possibly on 1 January 1855, when his salary was 250 thalers.<sup>16</sup> He published his first article, a study of one of the Teutonic Knights, in 1856. In that same year he moved to Munich to join a group of scholars editing for publication the works of the Reichstag under the patronage of King Maximilian II of Bavaria.

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<sup>15</sup> Celenza points out that Ranke briefly argued in his *Geschichte der Päpste* (1834–36) that the revival of antiquity caused Italians to produce works of too much imitation and to neglect the vernacular, and Celenza affirms that Voigt and Burckhardt followed “in Ranke’s wake.” Christopher S. Celenza, *The Lost Italian Renaissance: Humanists, Historians, and Latin’s Legacy* (Baltimore, 2004), 9–10, 12. See also Leopold Ranke, *The History of the Popes, their Church and State, and especially their Conflicts with Protestantism in the Sixteenth & Seventeenth Century*, tr. E. Foster (3 vols.; London, 1850–53), I, 47–50. This is certainly true for Burckhardt, but only partially true, at most, for Voigt. Voigt criticizes the humanists for imitation, so he may have been following Ranke. But he does not blame the revival of antiquity for the neglect of the vernacular. Indeed, Voigt never discusses Italian vernacular literature, not even Petrarch’s vernacular poetry.

<sup>16</sup> Lehnerdt, “Georg Voigt,” 52, gives the date as 1 January 1855, and the salary. Maschke, “Voigt,” 759, gives the date as 1854; and Weber, *Biographisches Lexikon*, 624, gives 1852.

Heinrich von Sybel (1817–95), a prominent former student of Ranke who studied medieval and contemporary German history from a nationalist point of view, directed the project.<sup>17</sup> Voigt was also made an honorary professor at the University of Munich. In 1856 he published the first volume of his biography of Piccolomini: *Enea Silvio de' Piccolomini, als Papst Pius der Zweite, und sein Zeitalter*, which carries the story to 1449, with a fulsome dedication to his father.<sup>18</sup> On 11 July 1858, Voigt married Valeska von der Groeben, the daughter of an East Prussian nobleman.

*Die Wiederbelebung* was published in March 1859. The volume of the Reichstag acts for the years 1356 to 1486 on which Voigt worked was also published in 1859. And he began writing book reviews for *Historische Zeitschrift*, founded by Sybel in 1859. However, the commission to edit the Reichstag acts seems to have suffered financial difficulties at this time. Hence, Voigt was happy to accept appointment as ordinary professor of medieval and modern history at the University of Rostock in the state of Mecklenburg, 140 miles (225 kilometers) north of Berlin. At Rostock he taught Greek, Roman, medieval, German, English, and French history. In 1862 and 1863 he published the second and third volumes of his monumental study of Piccolomini. He also published articles on various topics in *Historische Zeitschrift* in 1860, 1863, 1866, and 1868, plus many reviews. He declined an offer to move to the University of Greifswald in 1865. In 1866 he became ordinary professor of medieval and modern history at the University of Leipzig in Saxony, a more prestigious university, where he taught for 23 years. As in Rostock, he taught in many fields: Greek and Roman history, German history to the death of Maximilian I (1519), the period of Charles V and Luther, and the French Revolution. He also taught palaeography and diplomatics. The only field in which he apparently did not lecture at either Rostock or Leipzig was the Italian Renaissance. Of course, he may have taught it in seminars. Voigt was an effective and popular lecturer; his lectures on the French Revolution attracted 200 to 300 students, a large number considering the small size of universities at

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<sup>17</sup> On Sybel see Thompson, *History of Historical Writing*, II, 186–91, 196–97, 208–14. At II, 191, Thompson lists Voigt as a student of Sybel, which is not correct.

<sup>18</sup> Georg Voigt, *Enea Silvio de' Piccolomini als Papst Pius der Zweite und sein Zeitalter* (3 vols.; Berlin, 1856–63). Vol. I appeared in 1856, vol. II in 1862, and vol. III in 1863, all with the same publisher (Georg Reimer) and in the same format.



that time. His colleague, Carl von Noorden (1833–83), ordinary professor of modern history at Leipzig, praised Voigt and Ranke in tandem as historians whose interests spanned the totality of history, while “we” younger historians do only “piecework.”<sup>19</sup> This was high praise indeed. The only thing missing in an otherwise successful pedagogical career was famous students. Unfortunately, none of the biographical studies mentions any historians who studied with Voigt.

Voigt was very productive at Leipzig. In the 1870s he produced very long (50, 80, and 190 pages) articles dealing with Charles V, his campaign against Tunis, and the Schmalkald War (1546–47), an important event in the German Reformation. In 1876 he published a detailed and long (444 pages) monograph on Prince Moritz (or Maurice) of Saxony (1521–53), the Lutheran duke of Albertine Saxony, for the years 1541 through 1547.<sup>20</sup> Based on documents from the state archives of Dresden, Königsberg, and Bamberg, Voigt’s book studies the very complicated political and religious politics of Moritz as he maneuvered to achieve the best results for his state at the expense of Ernestine Saxony and as an ally, later an opponent, of Charles V. Voigt also published articles in medieval German history and three articles on the Italian Renaissance. The first deals with Torquato Tasso at the court of Ferrara, his only known venture into sixteenth-century Italian Renaissance history. The second argues that Petrarch probably had access to the Verona manuscript of Cicero’s *Familiar Letters* before it was rediscovered in 1390. The third deals with Petrarch and the chancery of Venice.<sup>21</sup> And he prepared the greatly expanded second and third editions of *Die Wiederbelebung* (see below). He was elected to several honorary scholarly societies.

Afflicted by illness and physical decline, Voigt published little in the second half of the 1880s. He planned to write a history of the

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<sup>19</sup> “Mit Leopold Ranke and Georg Voigt wird einst alte Heroengeschlecht unserer Historiker zu Grabe gehen. Sie haben es noch verstanden, das Ganze der Geschichte mit ihrem Interesse zu umspannen und mit ihrem Geist zu erfüllen. Wir Jüngeren treiben nur Stückwerk.” Quote of Noorden from an unknown source by Lehnerdt, “Georg Voigt,” 57. Noorden did his *Habilitation* with Heinrich von Sybel and may have studied with Ranke. Weber, *Biographisches Lexikon*, 417.

<sup>20</sup> Georg Voigt, *Moritz von Sachsen 1541–1547* (Leipzig, 1876).

<sup>21</sup> “Torquato Tasso am Hofe zu Ferrara. Ein Vortrag,” *Historische Zeitschrift* 20 (1868), 23–52; “Über die handschriftliche Überlieferung von Ciceros Briefen,” *Berichte über die Verhandlungen der Königlich sächsischen Gesellschaft der Wissenschaften zu Leipzig, Philologisch-Historische Klasse* (1879), 41–65, not seen; “Die Briefsammlungen Petrarca’s und der venetianische Staatskanzler Benintendi,” *Abhandlungen der Königlich Bayerische Akademie der Wissenschaften, Historische Klasse*, 16, Abteilung 3 (1883), 1–102, not seen.

University of Leipzig but was only able to publish an article on Ramism at Leipzig in 1888. He became increasingly deaf and suffered from other ailments. In the fall of 1889 he suffered what appears to have been a blockage of the bladder. After two more years of illness and pain, he died on 18 August 1891.

## 2. *Die Wiederbelebung*

The Berlin publisher Georg Reimer, who also published Voigt's three volumes on Piccolomini, issued *Die Wiederbelebung des classischen Alterthums oder das erste Jahrhundert des Humanismus* in March 1859, with a foreword dated 30 January 1859, Munich.<sup>22</sup> Voigt begins the preface by seeing the voyages of discovery of the Renaissance and humanism as analogous, because each sought and found a new room in which mankind built new social and political archetypes housing noble creations. But the "rediscovery of classical antiquity" has been described so inadequately that its original and full meaning have been lost. More than the history of philology, i.e., the study of classical languages and civilization, was involved. Just as the discovery of new lands in the fifteenth century had great meaning, so also there was a growing understanding that classical languages were only the means which led mankind to new material for cultural formation (*Bildungstoff*).

Voigt recognizes previous scholarship. One cannot say that "the Italians of the period of the Renaissance" ("*die Italiener die Periode des Rinascimento*," as Voigt uses the Italian word for Renaissance) have been overlooked or neglected.<sup>23</sup> Each little state and village, cloister and church, produced biographical information celebrating its role in it. He also acknowledges the contributions of a handful of Italian scholars, including Girolamo Tiraboschi (1731–94) and Lorenzo

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<sup>22</sup> Voigt, *Die Wiederbelebung des classischen Alterthums oder das erste Jahrhundert des Humanismus* (Berlin: Georg Reimer, 1859), iii–vi. Hereafter referred to as "1859 ed." Voigt, *Die Wiederbelebung des classischen Alterthums oder das erste Jahrhundert des Humanismus* (2 vols.; Berlin: G. Reimer, 1880–81). Hereafter referred to as "1880–81 ed." Voigt, *Die Wiederbelebung des classischen Alterthums oder das erste Jahrhundert des Humanismus*. Dritte Auflage, besorgt von Max Lehnerdt (2 vols.; Berlin: Georg Reimer, 1893). This was republished as a photographic reprint in two volumes and labeled "Vierte unveränderte Auflage" (2 vols.; Berlin: Walter De Gruyter & Co., 1960). Although the 1893 edition has been examined, the 1960 reprint, called "1960 ed.," will be cited because of its greater availability.

<sup>23</sup> 1859 ed., iv.

Mehus (1716–91), author of *Ambrosii Traversarii generalis Camaldulensium aliorumque ad ipsum, et ad alios de eodem Ambrosio latinae epistolae* (2 vols.; Florence, 1759), a fundamental work on Florentine humanism dealing with more than Traversari, which Voigt uses extensively. But he also notes that the humanists of the fifteenth century left many works that remain unexamined in Italian libraries. The fragmentary nature of the scholarship leaves many gaps. He states that he wrote the book in faraway Königsberg using the library there with its lacunae, which not even the Berlin library (he does not specify which one) could remedy, and revised it in Munich. He thanks unnamed friends, and hopes that manuscripts yet to be found in Italian libraries will fill out the picture.

The most interesting information in the preface is that Voigt drafted *Die Wiederbelebung* in Königsberg. He may have begun it as early as 1852; he certainly had a draft before going to Munich in 1856. Obviously, his duties as second custodian of the Königsberg university library took little time and gave him free run of the library. Thus, he drafted the book between the ages of 25 and 29. He then revised it in Munich, and it appeared in print a few days before his thirty-second birthday. It was a work of youthful enthusiasm and much energy, as Voigt was simultaneously occupied with his study of Piccolomini and his editorial work at Munich. In the preface to the revised 1880–81 edition, Voigt again refers to the book being written with the resources of the Königsberg library, which he now describes as “only middling” (*nur mittelmässigen*). He then mentions several other German libraries consulted, plus those of Basel.<sup>24</sup> He does not mention Italian libraries. Despite his disparaging comment, the number of sixteenth-century editions and eighteenth-century works of erudition cited in the first edition suggests that the University of Königsberg Library was not bad at all.

But Voigt does not explain here or elsewhere how he came to write the book. Possibly he read widely in the works of the humanists in preparation for his study of Piccolomini, became fascinated with Petrarch, who does not figure in the Piccolomini book, and then with the humanists as a group. Another possibility is that he responded to a dawning interest in Renaissance classical studies. A few scholars, especially Germans, had begun to think about the

<sup>24</sup> 1880–81 ed., I, iv; also found in the 1960 ed., I, vi.

revival of classical antiquity. They started to use the term *Humanismus* in a broad but vague sense to mean a combination of the study of the classics, a break with the Middle Ages, and a different attitude toward life.<sup>25</sup> But since Voigt did not refer to any German predecessors in the book, this also is speculation. In any case, his originality was to see the revival of classical antiquity as a whole, and humanists as a cohort of new men who changed themselves, their world, and the world to come. He saw the significance of humanism in its totality and impact before anyone else did.

After the preface and a detailed table of contents, the first edition of *Die Wiederbelebung* presents 486 pages of text with limited notes in an octavo format. The text begins with an introduction on the medieval Italian background.<sup>26</sup> Voigt admits that the history of fourteenth- and fifteenth-century Italy, with its almost anarchical politics, seemed very unpromising ground for the mission entrusted to Italy. In addition, the universities were prisons of the spirit because of the strong bonds of Scholasticism. Yet Italy had the heritage of the language, the law, and the Church of Rome. It enjoyed considerable freedom from the influence of the two supranational powers of the Middle Ages, the Empire and the Church. The seed of a new civilization will be planted; Italy will be entrusted with the mission of reviving the Hellenic and Roman world. We will study the “the cultural-historical process” of “the rebirth of classical antiquity and its penetration into the intellectual life, first of all, of Italy.”<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> Wallace K. Ferguson, *The Renaissance in Historical Thought: Five Centuries of Interpretation* (Cambridge, Mass., 1948), 151–59. According to Kristeller, F. J. Niethammer coined the word *Humanismus* to mean “the educational theory that tried to defend the traditional place of classical studies in the school curriculum.” Paul Oskar Kristeller, *Renaissance Thought and Its Sources*, ed. Michael Mooney (New York, 1979), 284, n. 64.

<sup>26</sup> What follows is an all too brief summary of the contents of the 1859 ed., with references, when possible, to all three German editions. Readers may also locate the quotes and references in the Italian translation (full citation in note 61). The latter is a translation of the German 1880–81 ed. with a detailed table of contents. Ferguson, *Renaissance in Historical Thought*, 159–63, provides a good short summary of *Die Wiederbelebung*, with three long quotations, from the 1859 edition. The only other brief summary of Voigt in English is Paul F. Grendler, “Voigt, Georg,” in *Encyclopedia of the Renaissance*, ed. Grendler et al. (6 vols.; New York, 1999), V, 302. Denys Hay translated into English a few well-chosen pages from the 1893 edition in *The Renaissance Debate*, ed. Denys Hay (New York, 1965), 29–34.

<sup>27</sup> “Wir haben hier nur ein Stadium und eine Seite dieses culturgeschichtlichen Processes zu verfolgen, die Wiedergeburt des classischen Alterthums und sein Eindringen in das geistige Leben zunächst Italiens.” 1859 ed., 4.

We will follow it through its first tentative steps, then its maturation. The literary monuments of classical antiquity were in a winter's sleep. The men of the Roman and Greek authors will speak again after their seven-hundred-year slumber.<sup>28</sup>

Voigt passes in brief review a number of medieval authors who did not appreciate the writers of antiquity and sometimes saw them as demons in the night. Nor was the Church favorably disposed toward the pagan writers of antiquity. The Church and "its servant, Scholasticism," held back thought.<sup>29</sup> Voigt appreciates the importance of the manuscript copying in the monasteries and the greatness of Dante. Moreover, in the second edition he adds some pages on the "precursors of humanism," especially Albertino Mussato (1261–1329).<sup>30</sup> But overall, he presents a negative description of the intellectual history of the Middle Ages, seen as quite different from the Renaissance.

In Book One, Voigt deals with Petrarch in the longest and most important section of the volume. Ninety of the 486 pages of the text (18.5% of the book) are devoted to him. Petrarch is the most important figure because he was the father of humanism. Voigt announces in the second sentence of the first chapter: "The prophet and at the same time discoverer of the new world of humanism was Francesco Petrarca."<sup>31</sup> Voigt's approach to Petrarch is that of intellectual biography. The events in his life, such as his dealings with Cola di Rienzo, stimulate and illumine Petrarch's thought and personality. Voigt studies the major themes of Petrarch's thought as found in his Latin works: his eloquence, style, and personality; his enthusiasm for antiquity; his search for Cicero's works; the attempt to learn Greek; Cola di Rienzo; Petrarch's political views; his criticism of law; his enthusiasm for Plato; his notions on religious belief and the Church; his use of Augustine's *Confessions*; his attacks on Scholastic theology and the Averroists; and his impact on others. Voigt ignores the vernacular poetry. Although the notes are neither numerous nor

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<sup>28</sup> "Die Männer selbst, welche die römischen und griechischen Autoren wieder in das Leben führten, sprachen regelmässig von ihrem siebenhundertjährigen Schummer." 1859 ed., 4.

<sup>29</sup> "Das Denken hielt sie durch ihr Dienerin, die Scholastik, in Zucht und Banden." 1859 ed., 6.

<sup>30</sup> 1880–81 ed., I, 16–20; 1960 ed., I, 16–19.

<sup>31</sup> "Der Prophet und zugleich der Entdecker der neuen Welt des Humanismus war Francesco Petrarca." 1859 ed., 12; 1880–81 ed., I, 21; 1960 ed., 1, 20. The 1880–81 and 1960 editions omit "Der Prophet und zugleich."

lengthy in the first edition, the vast majority are quotes from and citations to printed editions of Petrarch's works, especially the *Opera omnia* of Basel, 1554.

Voigt's prose expresses some of the enthusiasm and pronouncements of Romantic-era historiography. There are some convoluted sentences, while others express grandiose thoughts that are very difficult to pin down. But the approach is not particularly philosophical. Although he sees humanism as the beginning of the modern world, Voigt's teleology goes no further. No Hegelian *Weltgeist* marches through *Geschichte*. For example, he never argues that humanism or the Renaissance led to the Reformation. Indeed, there are only two passing references to Luther in the book. Rather, Voigt is fascinated by the lives and works of the humanists, and describes them with verve and much praise and blame.

Petrarch is Voigt's historical hero. Even though the man of genius is not conscious of his own influence, Petrarch signaled the beginning of humanism in the intellectual struggles of the modern world.<sup>32</sup> Thus, Petrarch opposed Scholasticism. And Voigt makes considerable use of Petrarch's invectives, including *On His Own Ignorance and That of Many Others*. Petrarch laughed at the dignity of doctors who believed that they could transform an unlearned man into a presumptuous learned one. He viewed the universities as nests of dark ignorance. He opposed much of their learning and the great authority of Aristotle. But he realized that the fault was not Aristotle's alone, but that of the Church and Scholasticism. For Petrarch the truly learned person was the active man, whose true knowledge served virtue. Petrarch as a humanist wanted to plant the disciplines in a universal culture. For Petrarch morality or moral philosophy was all that mattered. The true philosopher was identical with the good Christian. As part of his enthusiasm for antiquity, Petrarch initiated and promoted the cult of Plato. In this he acted more through instinct than reason.

Voigt sees Petrarch's attitudes toward the Church and churchmen as complex. In his youth Petrarch was fascinated by Ciceronian eloquence and the heroic memories of antiquity, and had little concern for the Church and faith. He strongly criticized the Avignonese papacy. In maturity he cared more about the Church and religious matters. Petrarch condemned the licentious lives of priests and monks.

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<sup>32</sup> See 1859 ed., 37–38. The entire Petrarch section is found in 1859 ed., 12–101; 1880–81 ed., I, 21–159; 1960 ed., I, 20–156.

But he lived in concubinage and had two children, whom he legitimized. This is the first of many times in which Voigt points out the contradictions between what the humanists professed and what they did.

The *Confessions* of Augustine eventually came into Petrarch's hands. He approached Augustine differently from others who read the Fathers of the Church. Petrarch saw Augustine as a man after his own heart and Augustine's eloquence as a stimulus to save his own soul. At the same time Augustine's influence also caused Petrarch to be somewhat theatrical about his spiritual struggles. Petrarch's love for Augustine helped persuade future humanists to esteem Augustine above all other Fathers of the Church. Petrarch was the first to make a sharp and precise separation between the religion of Christ taught in the New Testament, supported by the works of Augustine, Jerome, and Lactantius, and fourteenth-century theology. Voigt notes that Petrarch wrote very little about saints, heresies, miracles, relics, visions, and revelations.

Voigt emphasized Petrarch's individualism, its contrast with the Middle Ages, and its importance for modern man.<sup>33</sup> The spirit of corporatism reigned in the Middle Ages. After the great movements of peoples of the last centuries of the Roman Empire, humanity crystallized into groups, orders, and systems, of which the most important were hierarchy and feudalism. In no other era did multitudes live and act with such uniformity. The few great men who emerged were only representatives of the system or first among equals, like feudal leaders and high churchmen. Their greatness did not derive from events or their personal qualities, but from the greater energy with which they embodied the system. The champions of humanity were not individuals but groups and corporations.

Petrarch broke these chains. He conversed with the dead and with himself, and dared to present to the world his own individuality as a model and example. In this sense Petrarch is the prophet of the new time, the precursor of the modern world.<sup>34</sup> He was the first person in whom individualism affirmed itself with all its rights. Dante

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<sup>33</sup> 1859 ed., 80–83; 1880–81 ed., I, 131–34; 1960 ed., I, 128–31. Ferguson, *Renaissance in Historical Thought*, 161–62.

<sup>34</sup> “Wir nehmen keinen Anstand, Petrarca in diesem Sinne den Propheten der neuen Zeit, den Ahnherrn der modernen Welt zu nennen.” 1859 ed., 81; 1880–81 ed., I, 131; 1960 ed., I, 129.

had a little of this, but it seldom emerged. In Petrarch individualism appears in all of its manifestations. His great thirst for glory and his vanities were an integral part of it. His ambition and vanity were not simply stains of character but natural consequences of his recognition of his own worth. In the writings of Cicero and Augustine he found sentiments that were similar to those of his own soul. In Petrarch there was a tumultuous contrast of feelings that managed to live in harmony, and this characterizes modern man. Petrarch did not suspect that he had discovered the modern world that began with him. Rather, he returned to the ancients, a new way of proceeding. But he felt something inside of himself which distanced him from the rest of men. This explains the irresistible fascination that Petrarch exercised on his contemporaries, who regarded him as a mysterious prophet. Petrarch did a great deal to revive classical studies, and he contributed more than anyone else to ruin Scholasticism. But his most splendid creation was his own individuality.

Voigt argues, possibly for the first time, certainly for the first time in a detailed and comprehensive scholarly analysis, that Petrarch was the father of humanism. Not only was Petrarch the first humanist, but he exerted great influence on future humanists. His treatises offered initial examples of almost all the literary genres (letters, moral treatises, invectives, eclogues, etc.) that his children, the humanists, would cultivate for the next 100 years.<sup>35</sup> Voigt offers a good summary of the various strands in Petrarch's thought, his differences from medieval ways of thinking, and his personality as the key to his interpretation, and the reasons why later humanists followed his lead. Probably the majority of scholars accept Voigt's view that Petrarch was the originator of humanism, even though they add qualifications, soften the rhetoric, and differ on details. Hans Baron saw Petrarch as the embodiment of the first phase of humanism, before it became civic. Witt sees Petrarch as the key figure in the third generation of humanists, the man who turned humanism in a new direction and greatly influenced future humanists.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> "Unter Petrarca's Werken finden wir fast alle die Gattungen vertreten, die hundert Jahre lang von seinen Jüngern, den Humanisten, gepflegt wurden." 1859 ed., 99–100; 1880–81 ed., I, 153; 1960 ed., I, 150.

<sup>36</sup> Hans Baron, *The Crisis of the Early Italian Renaissance: Civic Humanism and Republican Liberty in an Age of Classicism and Tyranny* (rev. ed., Princeton, 1966), 5, 119–23, with a reference to Petrarch as "the father of Humanism" at 120; Ronald G. Witt, *"In the Footsteps of the Ancients": The Origins of Humanism from Lovato to Bruni* (Leiden, 2000), 230–91. The chapter is entitled, "Petrarch, Father of Humanism?"



Even the reader who does not accept Voigt's claims for Petrarch will find much usable information. In the 1880–81 edition Voigt adds more scholarly apparatus and discusses issues in Petrarch scholarship. For example, he adds a footnote on the date of composition of Petrarch's *De secreto conflictu curarum suarum* (*The Secret Book*). He notes that recent Italian scholarship places the date of composition as 1342 on the basis of a reference to Laura as still living. Voigt cautions that this proves only that a particular passage and the conception of the book can be dated to 1342. He adds that Petrarch worked on the book at intervals, and that some scholars give three different, later, dates for the three books of the work.<sup>37</sup>

In Book Two, Voigt discusses Petrarch's immediate disciples, Giovanni Boccaccio (1313–75), Luigi Marsili or Marsigli (d. 1394), and Coluccio Salutati (1331–1406). All three lived in Florence, a place where Petrarch's spirit could grow. The text quickly becomes an extensive account of humanism in Florence through the era of Lorenzo de' Medici (leader of Florence, 1469–92) in the rest of Book Two and most of Book Three, a total of 104 pages. It is the largest section, slightly longer than the Petrarch section and some 18 pages longer than the section on humanism in Rome.

For Voigt, Boccaccio is the patient and accurate scholar who lives for himself and his studies. Marsili is the founder of the first free association of learned men in which learning and human aspirations can be cultivated independently of the authority of Church and university. Salutati acquires for humanism the civic right to be involved in the life of the state.<sup>38</sup> Voigt then goes into detail on their lives and works.

Voigt admires the erudition and diligence of Boccaccio's *De genealogia deorum gentilium*, which he describes as the first complete manual for a science of antiquity. But he also finds it confused and undigested. Boccaccio falls short of the example set by Petrarch because he respected the authority of Aristotle and Scholasticism too much. He lacked Petrarch's boldness. Boccaccio was the first of many humanists whose accomplishments Voigt appreciates but who, nevertheless, did not measure up to Petrarch. Marsili was at the center of a group of learned men who met to discuss issues of learning and public concern. The reference is to the description of these meetings in the

<sup>37</sup> 1880–81 ed., I, 134–35, n. 2; 1960 ed., I, 132, n. 1.

<sup>38</sup> "Boccaccio stellt die Freude des stillen Gelehrtenfleisses dar; Marsigli ist der Gründer des ersten freien Vereins, in welchem Wissenschaft und menschliches

*Paradiso degli Alberti*, written by Giovanni Gherardo da Prato about 1389. It is a text much discussed by more recent scholars of Florence and Florentine humanism. For Voigt their meetings were important because a group of learned men proclaimed their intellectual independence from Church and university. Salutati was most important for his politico-literary activities, especially his official and semi-official letters written as chancellor of Florence. Although his Latin style was inflated and turgid, he introduced classical citations and allusions in the epistolary style of Seneca and Petrarch, a new chancery style. Before long other humanists found employment in chanceries. At the same time, Salutati's art of persuasion opened the door to deception. Voigt asks rhetorically, was not Salutati the father of political lying more than a hundred years before Machiavelli? Salutati had the advantage over Machiavelli that using learning and style to deceive others was a new skill.<sup>39</sup>

Voigt then goes through the activities of a number of other humanists of the early fifteenth century, including their search for manuscripts, their exchange of books, and much else. He sees the humanists of the fifteenth century as wandering scholars. They have no fixed center, they move from place to place, they conduct nomadic schools, any town can be their *patria*. They are a new social class, members of a republic of learning open to those of talent. They are free and independent, but sought after by the powerful.<sup>40</sup>

Even though the humanists could find homes anywhere, they flourished in republics, especially Florence. Voigt may have been the first in a long line of scholars to ask, why was Florence "the republic of the muses" (*die Musenrepublik*)?<sup>41</sup> He gives several answers. The nobles engaged in commerce without shame and also supported learning. The republican spirit was important. Although a great power in Italy, Florence had to be on guard against the princedoms who threatened to overwhelm her at any time. Without a strong combination of love

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Streben ausserhalb der Kirche und Hochschule gepflegt werden; Salutato hat dem Humanismus im Staatsleben das Bürgerrecht erworben." 1859 ed., 103; 1880–81 ed., I, 164; 1960 ed., I, 161.

<sup>39</sup> 1859 ed., 123; 1880–81 ed., I, 206; 1960 ed., I, 202. However, it must be said that the discussion of Salutati in the 1880–81 edition is much longer than that of the 1859 edition and quite good. See 1880–81 ed., I, 194–214; 1960 ed., I, 191–211.

<sup>40</sup> 1859 ed., 126, 132–33; 1880–81 ed., I, 215–16, 235–36; 1960 ed., I, 212, 232–33. A little of this is available in English translation in *Renaissance Debate*, 32–33.

<sup>41</sup> 1859 ed., 148; also in the table of contents at viii; 1880–81, I, ix, 290; 1960 ed., I, xii, 288.

of *patria* and discipline, riches and culture, Florence would have succumbed. Florence shaped humanism. "It is undeniable that from this republic the modern republic of learning received in great part its form and character."<sup>42</sup> Voigt praises the erudition of the Florentine humanists. But this erudition, which loves art so much, also hides the seductions of paganism, which is the essence of the Florentine spirit. This paganism operates sometimes in concealed fashion, sometimes openly and impetuously, and will spread to the rest of Italy and to the modern world.<sup>43</sup>

Despite arguing that Petrarch and many other humanists disdained universities, Voigt provides information about the University of Florence from the first attempt to establish it in 1321. He describes the university careers of humanists who eventually taught there, including the tumultuous five years of Francesco Filelfo at the University of Florence (1429–34). Thus, although Voigt advances strong interpretive arguments throughout, he offers a great deal of historical information which does not fit his interpretive scheme. He repeats the strong interpretive statements word-for-word in the second and third editions but adds even more information which does not necessarily fit them. This is a key reason why scholars have found the book useful.

By contrast with Florence, Voigt does not see Venice, the other major republic, welcoming humanism. The Venetian ideology of a strong and rigid state kept humanism and humanists at a distance. Florence was Athens, Venice was Sparta. Only a few Venetian nobles (Carlo Zeno, Leonardo Giustiniani, Francesco Barbaro, Lauro Quirini) embraced humanism.<sup>44</sup> Later historians of Venice have confirmed the importance of the state ideology. But rather than disparaging Venice, they argue that Venetian humanism differed from humanism elsewhere.<sup>45</sup> The edition of 1880–81 included much more information

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<sup>42</sup> "Es ist unleugbar, dass von dieser Republik die moderne Republik der Wissenschaften zum grossen Theile Form und Charakter empfangen hat." 1859 ed., 103; 1880–81 ed., I, 161; 1960 ed., I, 158.

<sup>43</sup> "Eine Gelehrsamkeit, die in ihrem Schoosse die Kunst trug, ein freier Sinn für die Welt der schönen Formen, hinter dem freilich verführerisch des Heidenthum schlummerte, das war die Essenz des florentinischen Geistes, die sich, bald unmerklich ausduftend, bald in voller Wallung daherströmend, ganz Italien und durch Italien der modernen Welt mitgetheilt hat." 1859 ed., 205; 1880–81 ed., I, 413; 1960 ed., I, 410.

<sup>44</sup> 1859 ed., 207–13; 1880–81 ed., I, 415–45; 1960 ed., I, 412–43.

<sup>45</sup> See, for example, Margaret L. King, *Venetian Humanism in an Age of Patrician Dominance* (Princeton, 1986), 37–49. She cites Voigt at xx, n. 4, and in King,

about Venetian humanism, including humanists who passed through Venice and Padua, and Isotta Nogarola (1418–1466), the female humanist of Verona whom Guarino Guarini snubbed.<sup>46</sup>

After very brief treatment of humanism in Siena and Genoa, Voigt turns to humanism in the princedoms of Italy.<sup>47</sup> Although Petrarch enthusiastically endorsed republican liberty, he lived happily in the courts of princes and prelates. So also the humanistic school, the heir of his spirit, could accommodate itself to all sorts of political regimes. Indeed, Italy had democratic republics, oligarchic republics, princedoms loved by the people, despotisms, and a cosmopolitan ecclesiastical hierarchy. Humanism assumed a different and unique air in each. Voigt much prefers republics. But he acknowledges that princely courts offered practical advantages to humanists. Some went from court to court seeking a quiet life and security. For them the ideal position was as an esteemed court poet, well-paid but without official duties. A court position was much better than a vagabond life.

Voigt's description of princedoms anticipated some aspects of Burckhardt's much broader discussion of the state as a work of art. For Voigt the majority of princes are tyrants in the old sense of the word, meaning that they rose on the ruins of popular regimes. The power of these violent adventurers and bastards is founded mostly on their personal qualities. None of them feel secure; the sentiment of liberty terrifies them, because it would wake up the people. They have to deal with enemies all around them. At the same time they must habituate the nobility to court life, create a regular government, fill the treasury, treat the people with mildness, and dazzle them with splendor and magnificence.

The humanists, in turn, serve a prince by celebrating his person and dynasty. They write history that adds learning and splendor to the prince and his family and are handsomely rewarded. But Voigt laments the consequences. It is a discouraging business for the historian who finds these trumpets of dynastic glory (i.e., humanistic descriptions of princes) resounding in the ears of contemporaries and posterity. Ever since, Italian writers have exaggerated beyond measure praise

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"Humanism in Venice," in *Renaissance Humanism: Foundations, Forms, and Legacy*, ed. Albert Rabil, Jr. (3 vols.; Philadelphia, 1988), I: *Humanism in Italy*, 209–34, at 209.

<sup>46</sup> For Nogarola, see 1880–81 ed., I, 444–45; 1960 ed., I, 441–42.

<sup>47</sup> For this and the following two paragraphs, see 1859 ed., 215–17; 1880–81 ed., I, 447–51; and 1960 ed., I, 444–48.

of their compatriots, a bad habit communicated to other nations. Historical truth must be sought out and only reveals herself faintly. Despite this negative judgment, Voigt provides a great deal of useful information about humanism and humanists in the princedoms of Naples, Ferrara, Mantua, and elsewhere.

Book Five provides a lengthy and important account of humanism at the papal court.<sup>48</sup> The papacy needed the humanists to write for it in good Latin in the contests against secular states in the period of the Great Schism and Church councils. The majority of humanists who joined the Curia did so in order to earn a good living, a view in which a recent historian of Roman humanism concurs.<sup>49</sup> Voigt then provides a comprehensive account, full of useful information, of humanism in the papal court in the fifteenth century, which becomes almost three times longer in the 1880–81 and 1893 editions.<sup>50</sup> Voigt sees fundamental differences between humanism and Christianity. Despite their employment in the papal Curia, the humanists feel pagan. They adhere to a Stoic ethic instead of Christian morality. But the humanists do not dissent openly; their indifference to religious and theological doctrine saves them from trouble. Voigt also notes that the humanists attacked the monks for being lazy, falsely humble, and ignorant of antiquity. Humanism is a born enemy of the Church, a dangerous serpent that the papacy nourishes at its own bosom.<sup>51</sup>

Book Six surveys the beginning of humanism in Germany and England, with a few comments on Hungary and Poland. Italy gave the first example and impulse that attracted other nations to the cult of antiquity. Humanism, which always had a cosmopolitan bent, began to resonate abroad at the time of the councils of Constance (1414–18) and Basel (1431–49). Voigt notes indigenous humanist developments north of the Alps, such as the schools of the Brethren of the Common Life, then describes the manuscript hunting and

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<sup>48</sup> Voigt often writes “Church” when he means “papacy” or “papal court.” In what follows papacy or papal court sometimes have been substituted for Church.

<sup>49</sup> 1859 ed., 269–70; 1880–81 ed., II, 1–4; 1960 ed., II, 1–4; John F. D’Amico, *Renaissance Humanism in Papal Rome: Humanists and Churchmen on the Eve of the Reformation* (Baltimore, 1983), chaps. 1–3. D’Amico cites Voigt on 241, n. 1; 244, n. 20; and 253, n. 121.

<sup>50</sup> Compare the 1859 ed., 269–365, excluding about 10 pages devoted to other subjects; the 1880–81 ed., II, 1–245, excluding about 10 pages devoted to Florentine Platonism; and 1960 ed., II, 1–243, again excluding about 10 pages.

<sup>51</sup> 1859 ed., 468–74; 1880–81 ed., II, 212–22; 1960 ed., II, 211–21.

other activities of Italian humanists outside of Italy. Members of the Roman Curia and humanists such as Poggio Bracciolini and Aeneas Silvius Piccolomini played key roles in spreading humanism north of the Alps. Voigt digresses to note that Germans and Italians did not always understand each other. The Germans saw the polished manners of the Italians as concealing cleverness and corruption. The Italians saw the rough naturalness of the Germans as barbarity. The differences between them helped foster German hostility to the ecclesiastical hierarchy.<sup>52</sup>

Voigt's inclusion of ultramontane, especially German, humanism, and his argument that Italian humanists played a role in the origins of German humanism, was innovative and stimulated debate in Germany. For example, in 1882 Ludwig Geiger, a professor at the University of Berlin, published a large book that devotes 320 pages to Italian humanism and 250 pages to German humanism. He pays obeisance to Voigt, but tends to view the two humanisms as separate.<sup>53</sup> This debate will continue in German historiography (see Baron below).

Book Seven, the last of the volume, is a lengthy discussion of the genres of humanist writings and their characteristics.<sup>54</sup> The book, especially in the second and third editions, combines excellent detailed examination of humanistic writings with many negative evaluations of the contents of the works and the inadequacies of the humanists. Voigt surveys the most important humanistic genres and many examples of epistolography, historiography, invectives, moral treatises, textual editing, and even a few examples of Latin humanistic poetry. He particularly commends the critical historiographical scholarship of the humanists. He praises their Latin prose style; its lightness is far superior to the crabbedness of Scholastic Latin. He likes the cult of friendship of the humanists and how their letters bound them together.

But the faults and inadequacies of the humanists are many and large. Voigt charges the humanists with artificiality. Although one of Plutarch's heroes could make the heart of an ancient Roman beat

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<sup>52</sup> 1859 ed., 366–99, with comments on national characteristics at 374; 1880–81 ed., II, 246–362, with the comments about national characteristics and antagonism at 264; 1960 ed., II, 244–358, with the comments about national characteristics and antagonism at 261–62. The expanded editions add material on humanism in France and Spain.

<sup>53</sup> Ludwig Geiger, *Renaissance und Humanismus in Italien und Deutschland* (Berlin, 1882).

<sup>54</sup> 1859 ed., 400–86; 1880–81 ed., II, 363–516; 1960 ed., II, 359–510. Because Voigt both greatly expanded and rearranged this section in the second and third editions, it is the most difficult to compare with the first edition.

faster, it could not do the same for a Renaissance man. Another fault is imitation: the humanists spent too much energy imitating the writings of the ancients. Antiquity could be an element, but not the whole, of culture. The humanists were not always able to distinguish between the gold and the dross of antiquity, but loved both. Next, appearance and reality were at odds in the moral philosophy of the humanists. They professed to follow Stoicism, judging it to be compatible with Christianity. In reality they followed Epicurus, for whom pleasure is the highest good and the soul is not immortal.<sup>55</sup> The humanists declared that they followed high ideals of beauty and morality, but failed to live up to them. Voigt gives the humanists full credit for beginning a new era but, after Petrarch, he finds their efforts to be largely failures.

There are several possible reasons why Voigt finds the humanists disappointing despite devoting nearly 500 pages to them and their works. One reason is that he sees Italian humanism as almost exclusively an attempt to imitate the culture of antiquity, and imitation can never equal the original. Just as Voigt judges Roman culture to be imitative and inferior to Greek culture, so Italian humanism must be inferior to classical antiquity.<sup>56</sup> Moreover, Voigt makes Petrarch such a hero that no one can approach him, certainly not his followers. Perhaps a combination of excessive admiration for Hellas and the exaltation of Petrarch, the great individual, leads him to be overly critical of the humanists as a whole. It is possible that Voigt sees too much imitation of antiquity in the humanists, that he fails to realize the extent to which they combined the culture of antiquity with contemporary values and concerns. It can be argued that Voigt underestimates the originality of humanists such as Leonardo Bruni, Lorenzo Valla, and Francesco Filelfo. Finally, there may be a little of the earnest German Lutheran in Voigt. His disapproval of the humanists for treating spiritual matters as “frivolity” (*Frivolität*) and their attraction to “paganism” (*die Heidentum*) leads him to misunderstand the secular and civil aspects of their culture.<sup>57</sup>

<sup>55</sup> 1859 ed., 409; 1880–81 ed., II, 371–72; 1960 ed., II, 367–68.

<sup>56</sup> 1859 ed., 406; 1880–81 ed., II, 368; 1960 ed., II, 364. As Celenza notes, 10–11, the view that the Romans were inferior to the Greeks probably came ultimately from Johann Joachim Winckelmann (1717–68) and was common in Germany at the time. Voigt could also argue that because the Italian humanists were so imitative of the Romans, rather than the Greeks, they could not achieve greatness.

<sup>57</sup> 1859 ed., 457–59; 1880–81 ed., II, 468–69; 1960 ed., II, 463.

Although Voigt finds much fault with the humanists after Petrarch, he also credits them with huge accomplishments. They are new and very different from medieval men. They throw off the yoke of the Church, Scholasticism, and the universities. They usher in the modern world. Voigt likes the lively knowledge of the humanists, as opposed to the heavy aridity of the Scholastics. He approves of the Latin prose style of the humanists. The humanists have an artistic instinct which rises up against the pedantries of the system.<sup>58</sup> By ending the corporatism and deference to authority of the Middle Ages, humanism created the conditions for the modern world. But Voigt is not a Whig historian; he does not argue that humanism or the Renaissance as a whole led to the Protestant Reformation. Rather, he is fascinated by the humanists and their works, explains them as best he can, and recognizes that they are the beginning of a broad new age.

Despite its faults, the book is a magnificent achievement, and the subsequent editions are even greater. The 1859 edition has 486 pages of text, plus the foreword and a detailed table of contents, in a single volume. Voigt later called it “a youthful attempt.”<sup>59</sup> He then vastly enlarged the work. The 1880–81 edition has 1,111 pages, plus a preface, table of contents, and 13 pages of end bibliography, in two volumes in exactly the same format, with the same number of words on the page, as the first edition. In other words, the 1880–81 edition is exactly 2.3 times larger than the first edition.<sup>60</sup> Most of the new material deals with the humanists after Petrarch. An Italian translation of the second edition appeared in 1888 and 1890. It includes some additions and corrections submitted by the author.<sup>61</sup> After Voigt’s death in 1891, Max Lehnerdt edited a third German edition, published in 1893. Lehnerdt made a few changes in the text, with appropriate additions to the notes, to take into account new

<sup>58</sup> 1859 ed., 445; 1880–81 ed., II, 456–57; 1960 ed., II, 451.

<sup>59</sup> Diego Valbusa, “Prefazione” to the Italian translation, xi. See note 61 for the reference.

<sup>60</sup> The mathematical comparison is exact, because both the 1859 edition and the 1880–81 edition have 38 lines of text of the same length, in Gothic font of the same size, on every page.

<sup>61</sup> Voigt, *Il risorgimento dell'antichità classica ovvero il primo secolo dell'umanesimo*. Traduzione italiana con prefazione e note del Professore D. Valbusa, arricchita di aggiunte e correzioni inedite dell'autore. Edizione anastatica a cura di Eugenio Garin (3 vols.; Florence, 1888–1890; reprint, Florence, 1968). The reprint includes a third volume with the subtitle “Giunte e correzioni con gli indici bibliografico e analitico per cura di Giuseppe Zippel,” first published in Florence, 1897. This serves as an appendix listing corrections and more bibliography.



research. He thanks several scholars, including Francesco Novati and Remigio Sabbadini, for their help.<sup>62</sup> The second and third editions made the book into a comprehensive reference work about the humanists, their lives, and their writings, and added many more notes.

Three more editions of all or part of the book appeared after 1893. In 1894 a French translation of the first two books (of seven) of the 1893 German edition appeared. It covered the introduction on the Middle Ages, Book One on Petrarch, and Book Two on the first 50 years of humanism in Florence, about one quarter of the 1893 German edition. It added some additional bibliography on Petrarch based on Pierre de Nolhac, *Pétrarque et l'Humanisme*, which appeared in 1892.<sup>63</sup> In 1932 another German edition consisting of the first 45% of the text of the 1893 German edition, but with very few notes, was published.<sup>64</sup> On the last page the publisher announces the publication of a second volume containing the rest of the book. This has not been located and may not have appeared.

### 3. Influence

Scholars often discuss Voigt's book and Jacob Burckhardt's *Die Cultur der Renaissance in Italien: Ein Versuch* of 1860 together, because they see them making identical arguments about the Renaissance.<sup>65</sup> This is not accurate. While they share some views, major differences divide the two.

A very important difference is the aim and scope of the two books. Voigt's book is solely concerned with the revival of antiquity, while

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<sup>62</sup> 1893 ed., I, viii–x, “Vorwort zu dritten Auflage,” repeated with the same pagination in the 1960 reprint. This edition is printed in Roman type instead of the Gothic type of the first two German editions. The copy of the 1893 edition used comes from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill Library. It carries the signature of B(erthold). L. Ullman (1882–1964), who taught Classics at the University of North Carolina and is known for his studies of Italian humanism.

<sup>63</sup> *Pétrarque, Boccace et les débuts de l'humanisme en Italie d'après la Wiederbelebung des classischen Alterthums de Georg Voigt*. Traduit sur la 3<sup>e</sup> édition allemande par M. A. Le Monnier (Paris, 1894).

<sup>64</sup> Georg Voigt, *Die Renaissance: Italien* (Berlin, 1932). There is no further information in the volume itself. Its small size and format suggest that it was intended for a less scholarly readership.

<sup>65</sup> Examples of this tendency by two distinguished historians are Federico Chabod, *Scritti sul Rinascimento* (Turin, 1967), 15, 31, 79; and August Buck, “Der Beginn der modernen Renaissanceforschung im 19. Jahrhundert: Georg Voigt und Jacob

Burckhardt deals with the Renaissance as a whole. He includes sections on politics, individualism, the voyages of discovery, "The Discovery of the World and of Man," "Society and Festivals," "Morality and Religion," as well as "The Revival of Antiquity." Burckhardt has large concerns, such as "the character and fate of nations."<sup>66</sup> Voigt generally avoids large concepts. Burckhardt sweeps chronologically from the fourteenth through the sixteenth century, while Voigt discusses humanism between 1350 and 1450 with a few forays beyond. Burckhardt sees Italy collapsing into political, moral, and religious decadence in the sixteenth century. Voigt does not enter the sixteenth century. The two often handle historical material differently. For example, Burckhardt gives large and symbolic meaning to small incidents, because they represent the spirit of the age. Voigt does little of this. Burckhardt practices *Kulturgeschichte* as he sees it; Voigt is more an intellectual historian offering acute analyses of works and men.

They differ about the significance and nature of the revival of antiquity. For Burckhardt, "it was not the revival of antiquity alone, but its union with the genius of the Italian people that achieved the conquest of the Western world" and created the Renaissance.<sup>67</sup> Consequently, Burckhardt's discussion of it occupies only about one-fifth of his book. For Voigt, the revival of antiquity is the Renaissance. Nor do they describe the revival of antiquity in the same way. Voigt makes Petrarch the father of humanism, while Burckhardt sees a broad movement in the fourteenth century, of which Petrarch is only a part. Indeed, Burckhardt pays greater attention to the contribution of Boccaccio than to that of Petrarch, and he ignores Marsili and Salutati except for one reference to the latter. Burckhardt notes that the Florentines were more devoted to antiquity than other Italians. But he does not link the Florentine love of antiquity with the characteristics of the Florentine Republic and its nobles, as does Voigt.

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Burckhardt," in *Il Rinascimento nell'Ottocento in Italia e Germania. Die Renaissance im 19. Jahrhundert in Italien und Deutschland*, ed. August Buck and Cesare Vasoli (Bologna and Berlin, 1989), 23–36.

<sup>66</sup> Jacob Burckhardt, *The Civilization of the Renaissance in Italy*, tr. S. G. C. Middlemore, ed. Irene Gordon (New York, 1960), 302 for the quote. This translation is based on the German edition of 1868, the last edition prepared by the author, who made minor revisions to the 1860 edition.

<sup>67</sup> Burckhardt, *Civilization*, 145–210, for the section on the revival of antiquity, quote on 145.

There are similarities and differences in other areas. Both emphasize a contrast between the clerical culture of the Middle Ages and the cult of antiquity of mostly lay humanists. Both Voigt and Burckhardt note the symbiosis between the humanists and Italian princes. Both see the faults of the humanists as too much imitation in their writings, vanity, anti-clericalism, immorality, and writing without conviction. But they differ in their discussions of humanist literary genres. Voigt praises the critical spirit of humanist historiography, using Valla as a key example, while Burckhardt sees humanist Latin historiography as inferior to vernacular historiography. Voigt pays little attention to Latin humanist poetry, while Burckhardt devotes several pages to it in a short section on the revival of antiquity. For Voigt, the Latin literature of the humanists is what matters; he does not discuss vernacular literature. Burckhardt laments that the revival of antiquity led to a decline in the quality and use of the vernacular. He regrets this, because vernacular writing is a key part of the spirit of the Italian people, a matter of little concern to Voigt. A final difference is that subsequent scholars have used the two books differently. For a hundred years and more, historians of humanism have searched out and cited the useful information found in Voigt. By contrast, historians, and many more non-historians, cite Burckhardt for his sweeping ideas.

Many scholars have used and reacted to Voigt's book, but there is space to mention only three prominent historians. John Addington Symonds (1840–93) made considerable use of Voigt. His *The Revival of Learning* (1877), the second volume of the seven of *The Renaissance in Italy*, owes an enormous debt to the first edition of *Die Wiederbelebung*. Symonds mentions Voigt's book in the preface, adding "To Voigt and Burckhardt, having perforce traversed the same ground that they have done, I feel that I have been in a special sense indebted."<sup>68</sup> He certainly owes a lot to Voigt. He gives the humanists credit for the revival of antiquity (383–84). The sections on Petrarch (52–63), followed by that on Boccaccio, Marsili, and Salutati (63–77), are a condensation of Voigt's discussion. The reasons why Florence welcomed humanism (119–20), the dismissal of the importance of the writings of the humanists (375), and the paganism of the humanists

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<sup>68</sup> John Addington Symonds, *The Revival of Learning* (New York, 1960), vi. The preface is dated 1877, the year of first publication. Page references in the text come from this edition.

(“their passion for a Pagan ideal,” 381), and other material echo Voigt. Symonds’ analysis is often less disciplined and more diffuse than Voigt, partly because Symonds attempted to cover more chronological ground in fewer pages.

Freiherr Ludwig von Pastor (1854–1928) used Voigt extensively and accepted his view that Italian humanism manifested a pagan spirit. But he also saw a Christian humanism.<sup>69</sup> There were “two conflicting currents” in the stream of humanism, one pagan (*heidnisch*) and false, the other Christian and true.<sup>70</sup> “On one side the banner of pure paganism (*die Heidentum*) was raised by the fanatics of the classical ideal. Its followers wished to bring about a radical return to paganism both in thought and in manners. The other side strove to bring the new element of culture into harmony with the Christian idea.”<sup>71</sup> The former began with Boccaccio. He was followed by Lorenzo Valla, whom Pastor considered to be the worst of the false humanists, Antonio Beccadelli, Poggio Bracciolini, Francesco Filelfo, Aneneas Sylvius Piccolomini, and Carlo Marsuppini. They undermined faith and morals, attacked the Church, and promoted a radical pagan spirit.

Then Pastor discusses the true humanists. Petrarch was the first Christian humanist, followed by Giannozzo Manetti, Ambrogio Traversari, Leonardo Bruni, Gregorio Corraro, Francesco Barbaro, Maffeo Vegio, Vittorino da Feltre (whom Pastor praises more than any other humanist), and Tommaso Parentucelli who became Pope Nicholas V. Thanks to the Christian humanists, “the Renaissance was saved from bringing about its own destruction.”<sup>72</sup> Again Pastor relies heavily on Voigt for information and judgments.

There are other differences and similarities between the two scholars. Voigt views humanism as breaking with the Middle Ages and

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<sup>69</sup> For what follows, see Pastor, *History of the Popes*, I, 1–56 (“Introduction”), quotation on 13. Volume 1 of the German edition first appeared in 1886. See also Ferguson, *Renaissance in Historical Thought*, 342–43.

<sup>70</sup> Pastor consistently uses “*die Heidentum*” and “*heidnisch*,” the same words that Voigt used. See Pastor, *Geschichte der Päpste im Zeitalter der Renaissance bis zur Wahl Pius’ II: Martin V. Eugen IV. Nikolaus V. Kalixtus III*. Fünfte bis siebte vielfach umgearbeitete und vermehrte Auflage (Freiburg im Briesgau, 1925), 6. The English edition translates these words as “heathenism” and “heathen,” which, given the German historiographical tradition on humanism and the Renaissance, seems less accurate. Hence, I have changed the words taken from the English edition to “paganism” and “pagan.”

<sup>71</sup> Pastor, *History of the Popes*, I, 13.

<sup>72</sup> Pastor, *History of the Popes*, I, 13.

especially with Scholasticism. Pastor sees more continuity. Despite his criticism of pagan humanism, Pastor values highly the revival of classical antiquity and argues that the Church could and did combine classical literature with Christianity. Pastor laments the paganism of false humanism, but concedes that universal corruption in the Church left men morally weakened and susceptible to its siren call. He decries the attacks of the pagan humanists on monks and the Church, but he also denounces the monks who attack the humanists and have no time for classical antiquity. Overall, Pastor values Voigt a great deal and relies heavily on his scholarship to describe both false and true humanism. He cites and quotes *Die Wiederbelebung* and other works of Voigt 300 times or more in his essay on humanism and throughout the volumes dealing with the fifteenth century. He calls Voigt “the historian of humanism” and “an able modern historian.”<sup>73</sup>

Hans Baron recognized that Voigt produced “basic work on early Humanism.” Voigt was a key figure in received scholarship on the development of early Florentine humanism which Baron revised. He differed with Voigt on the dating of Bruni’s *Dialogi ad Petrum Histrum*, on the order of composition of the three books of Petrarch’s *Secret Book*, his interpretation of the *Paradiso degli Alberti*, and other matters.<sup>74</sup>

More intriguing is the pedagogical chain from Voigt to Baron at the University of Leipzig. Karl Lamprecht (1856–1915) succeeded Voigt in his professorship at Leipzig in 1891. Lamprecht rejected political history and criticized Ranke and his followers. He preferred *Kulturgeschichte*, which he defined as a socio-psychological science. The historian must concentrate on understanding society as a whole in

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<sup>73</sup> For the references to “the historian of humanism,” see Pastor, *History of the Popes*, I, 23, 256; II, 15. He calls Voigt “an able modern historian” at I, 17, and “conscientious” at II, 18 note †. Citations to and quotations from *Die Wiederbelebung*, sometimes two on a page, are found in I, 3, 4, 13, 17, 22, 23, 27, 28, 29, 31, 32, 33, 39, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 52, 66, 167, 168–69, 171, 256, 257, 305, 306, etc., plus references in other volumes. Pastor originally cited the 1880–81 second edition of *Die Wiederbelebung*. He changed the references to the third German edition and/or the Italian translation when they became available.

<sup>74</sup> Hans Baron, *The Crisis of the Early Italian Renaissance: Civic Humanism and Republication Liberty in an Age of Classicism and Tyranny* (2 vols.; Princeton, 1955), I, 180 (quote), 205; II, 396–98, 410, 546; Hans Baron, *Humanistic and Political Literature in Florence and Venice at the Beginning of the Quattrocento: Studies in Criticism and Chronology* (Cambridge, Mass., 1955), 14–15, 39, 71, 116, n. 6, 150; Hans Baron, *From Petrarch to Leonardo Bruni: Studies in Humanistic and Political Literature* (Chicago, 1968), 91, n. 103.

order to determine the psychological responses of individuals. Lamprecht established an institute for the study of cultural and universal history, and one of his students founded the *Archiv für Kulturgeschichte* in 1903. Although Lamprecht did not publish directly on the Italian Renaissance, so far as is known, he saw all civilizations progressing through stages, including the stage of Renaissance individualism.<sup>75</sup>

Lamprecht co-directed the *Habilitation* at Leipzig of Walter Goetz (1867–1958), who published several works on medieval and Renaissance Italy as well as works in German history. Goetz recognized Voigt's importance and accepted his concept of Renaissance humanism. But he asked for more study of the precise differences between Middle Ages and Renaissance, and wondered whether ancient culture influenced the Renaissance, or whether the Renaissance influenced our perception of antiquity?<sup>76</sup> In 1915 Goetz succeeded Lamprecht as ordinary professor of medieval and modern history at Leipzig and remained until 1933. In 1920 Hans Baron was a student in Goetz' seminar. At that time the prevailing interpretation of German humanism was that it developed independently of Italy. Baron's research paper for the seminar argued that fifteenth-century Italian humanism preceded and influenced German humanism, the position of Voigt.<sup>77</sup> This was the beginning of Baron's studies on Italian humanism. In 1955 Baron dedicated *The Crisis of the Early Italian Renaissance* to Walter Goetz, praising him as the one who taught him that "history should be a study of both politics and culture."<sup>78</sup>

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<sup>75</sup> On Lamprecht, see Weber, *Biographisches Lexikon*, 335–36; Weber, *Priester der Klio*, 561; and Thompson, *History of Historical Writing*, 422–28.

<sup>76</sup> See Goetz, "Mittelalter und Renaissance," *Historische Zeitschrift*, 98 (1907), 30–54; and "Renaissance und Antike," *Historische Zeitschrift*, 113 (1914), 237–59. See also Ferguson, *Renaissance in Historical Thought*, 226–27, 305–06, 371. For Goetz' career, see Weber, *Biographisches Lexikon*, 180–81; Weber, *Priester der Klio*, 561; and Herbert Grundmann, "Goetz, Walter Wilhelm," *Neue Deutsche Biographie*, VI (Berlin, 1964), 582–84.

<sup>77</sup> Hans Baron, *In Search of Florentine Civic Humanism: Essays on the Transition from Medieval to Modern Thought* (2 vols.; Princeton, NJ, 1988), II, 183.

<sup>78</sup> "To Walter Goetz my teacher and friend who introduced me to the Renaissance and taught me that history should be a study of both politics and culture. On his 87th birthday, November 11, 1954, in gratitude." Baron, *Crisis*, 1955 ed., I, no pag.

#### 4. Conclusion

Even though they wrote independently, Voigt and Burckhardt marched in the same direction part of the way. Together they made the Italian Renaissance an era worthy of consideration by historians. Before 1859, German Romantic historiography looked at the Middle Ages as a fascinating and heroic era of the past meriting intense study. Voigt and Burckhardt judged the Middle Ages negatively and made the Renaissance and humanism, including German humanism in the case of Voigt, attractive, colorful, and important. The Italian Renaissance never became so central in German historiography as the study of the Middle Ages or the German Reformation. But thanks to Voigt and Burckhardt, humanism and the Italian Renaissance became essential parts of the puzzle of the beginning of the modern European world for all historians to solve.

But Voigt made immense contributions that were his alone. His treatment of humanism was original and essential. Many of Voigt's ideas became fundamental bases of discussion for historians. He saw Petrarch as the first humanist. He was the first to recognize that humanism developed differently in republics, princedoms, and the papacy, and the first to assign to Florence an unique role in humanism. Voigt argued that humanism was pagan in spirit, and that the humanists were opposed to the Church, two ideas which historians only slowly modified. He judged the writings of the humanists to be imitative and not of great value, another idea which persisted too long. On the other hand, he charted the range of humanist literary genres and recognized the importance of the best examples. Above all, Voigt identified the rediscovery of classical antiquity as the fundamental cultural achievement of the Renaissance.<sup>79</sup> He joined humanism to the Renaissance so strongly that they have been united ever since.

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<sup>79</sup> Ferguson, *Renaissance in Historical Thought*, 160, makes this point.





## CHAPTER THIRTEEN

### HUMANISM AND THE ITALIAN UNIVERSITIES

David A. Lines

At the end of the fourteenth century, Leonardo Bruni (1370–1444) was studying law at the University of Florence when he heard that a Byzantine émigré, Manuel Chrysoloras, had come to Florence and was offering instruction in his native language and literature. This was exciting news to the youngster from Arezzo: although some communities at the very southern tip of the Italian peninsula had continued to speak Greek throughout the Middle Ages, in most other places across Europe Greek was known very imperfectly, if at all. Some scholars in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries had known enough Greek to translate Aristotle's works (and several spurious ones besides) into Latin, thus giving rise to a transformed Arts curriculum in the universities, but by the end of the fourteenth century that was all a distant memory. Aristotle now spoke Latin, and Plato's books were mute even to Petrarch. Dazzled by an exceptional opportunity, yet uncertain whether to interrupt his studies in law, Bruni debated what he should do:

When you have a chance to see and converse with Homer and Plato and Demosthenes and the other poets and philosophers and orators, about whom such wonderful things are said, and to acquire the wonderful education that comes with their study, will you leave yourself in the lurch and deprive yourself of it? Will you pass up this god-given opportunity? For seven hundred years now, no one in Italy has been able to read Greek. . . . There are plenty of teachers of the Civil Law, so you will always be able to study that, but this is the one and only teacher of Greek; if he should disappear, there would then be nobody from whom you could learn.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Translation from Gordon Griffiths, James Hankins, and David Thompson (eds.), *The Humanism of Leonardo Bruni: Selected Texts*, (Binghamton, 1987), 23–24; for the Latin text see Leonardo Bruni, *Rerum suo tempore gestorum commentarius*, ed. C. Di Piero, *Rerum Italicarum Scriptores*, n.s., 19.3 (Bologna, 1926), 431–32.

The outcome was, as we know, decisive for the direction humanism was to take in the fifteenth century. Having shelved his studies in law, Bruni translated important works of Plato and Basil the Great into Latin and provided fresh (if controversial) retranslations of Aristotle's works on moral philosophy. Knowledge of the ancient languages, including Greek and sometimes Hebrew, came to be one of the hallmarks of any self-respecting humanist. One cannot but help wondering whether things would have been quite the same, had Bruni decided to continue his legal studies rather than jumping ship.

Bruni was only one of numerous Italian humanists who studied at the university but then, for various reasons, interrupted their studies without a degree to pursue their own interests. Scholars have therefore tended to contrast developments within humanism with what was happening in the universities. Indeed, humanism has typically been viewed as a movement which grew outside of and in opposition to the culture of the universities. The strictures and scholastic teaching prevalent in these conservative institutions supposedly caused the humanists to look elsewhere for satisfaction of their intellectual curiosity. Since (it is argued) the universities were not open to the new cultural ideas and methods, meaningful developments in literature, mathematics, and science took place mainly outside of their walls—whether in schools such as that of Guarino da Verona, in private circles and academies, or in independent ventures. It is often pointed out that many of the most influential humanists—from Petrarch, Boccaccio, and Salutati to Bruni, Leon Battista Alberti, and Giannozzo Manetti—were not university professors, but independent scholars, school teachers, notaries, or civil servants.

Although this picture is not entirely wrong, I would like to suggest that the humanists' antipathy to the universities of their time has been overemphasized.<sup>2</sup> The common depiction of two separate and opposed

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<sup>2</sup> Kristeller warned years ago that "The opinion so often repeated by historians that the humanist movement originated outside the schools and universities is a myth which cannot be supported by factual evidence" (P. O. Kristeller, "Humanism and Scholasticism" in *idem, Renaissance Thought and Its Sources*, ed. Michael Mooney [New York, 1979], 93), but the relationship between humanism and the universities received little attention. More recently, a useful corrective to the traditional view was furnished by Jonathan Davies, *Florence and Its University during the Early Renaissance* (Leiden, 1998) and Paul F. Grendler, *The Universities of the Italian Renaissance* (Baltimore, 2002). I offered some observations on this topic in my *Aristotle's Ethics in the Italian Renaissance (ca. 1300–1650): The Universities and the Problem of Moral Education* (Leiden, 2002), 2–7. Also helpful and geographically broader are Walter

cultural spheres is mistaken. So too is the view that the universities were so backward that the only innovations could come from humanist-minded individuals. But here I shall especially argue that the interactions between humanism and the universities were more numerous and intense than is commonly assumed. The nature and development of this relationship will also receive special attention.

The first impression that needs correcting is that the humanists tended to leave or avoid the universities because they were instinctively hostile to them. In this connection, let us return first of all to Bruni's case, which many have considered paradigmatic. It is true that Bruni abandoned his studies in law in order to learn Greek at the feet of Chrysoloras. But Chrysoloras had been hired to teach Greek by the Florentine university (*studium*), which paid his salary even though it allowed him to conduct his teaching at home.<sup>3</sup> Furthermore, Bruni's own testimony reveals that, while he had been studying law, he also dedicated himself to other studies such as dialectic and rhetoric.<sup>4</sup> Bruni does not say where he studied these subjects, but we do know that he was a disciple of Giovanni Malpaghini, who taught rhetoric in the Florentine *studium* at least from 1394 to 1417 (with a gap between 1407 and 1412, when the *studium* was closed).<sup>5</sup> Furthermore, Bruni's university education also seems to have included the study of Aristotelian works, something which he later remarked upon with some satisfaction.<sup>6</sup> So Bruni did not abandon

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Rüegg, "The Rise of Humanism" in *idem* (ed.), *A History of the University in Europe* (4 vols.; Cambridge, 1992–), I (1992): *Universities in the Middle Ages*, ed. Hilde de Ridder-Symoens, 442–68; Luisa Avellini, "Università e umanesimo," in Gian Paolo Brizzi and Jacques Verger (eds.), *L'università in Europa dall'Umanesimo ai Lumi* (Milan, 2002), 20–35; and Paul F. Grendler, "The Universities of the Renaissance and Reformation," *Renaissance Quarterly*, 57 (2004), 1–42.

<sup>3</sup> For Chrysoloras' appointment, see Alessandro Gherardi, ed., *Statuti della Università e studio fiorentino dell'anno MCCCLXXXVII seguiti da un'Appendice di Documenti dal MCCCXX al MCCCLXXII*, Documenti di Storia Italiana, VII (Florence, 1881), 370 (14 March 1397); and Davies, *Florence and Its University*, 15, nn. 45–46.

<sup>4</sup> "Ego per id tempus Juri Civili operam dabam, non rudis tamen ceterorum studiorum. Nam et natura flagrabam disciplinarum amore et dialecticis ac rhetoribus non segnem operam impenderam" (Bruni, *Rerum suo tempore gestorum commentarius*, 431).

<sup>5</sup> On Malpaghini, see Ronald G. Witt, "Still the Matter of the Two Giovannis: A Note on Malpaghini and Conversino," *Rinascimento*, n.s., 35 (1995), 179–99, especially 183–86 for his teaching in the *studium*. Also see *idem*, "In the Footsteps of the Ancients": *The Origins of Humanism from Lovato to Bruni* (Leiden, 2000), 338–51.

<sup>6</sup> "Quasi vero Aristoteles ipse ab studio nostro fuerit alienus, cuius libros in adolescentia sic audivimus, ut etiam publice de his disputationes ex ordine studiorum substineremus. Biennio certe toto ab optimis illius disciplinae magistris incredibili

his university studies as such when Chrysoloras arrived in Florence, but he simply decided to “switch majors.” In any case, he greatly benefited from the teaching of various university professors, even though he left the university without a degree. And one should remember that the humanists were in good company when it came to attending the university only for a limited period: due to the high costs of graduation ceremonies and diplomas, the vast majority of university students did the same.<sup>7</sup>

It is worth noting that, like Bruni, numerous humanists who abandoned their university studies had been pursuing degrees in law.<sup>8</sup> Indeed, fifteenth-century Italian humanists seem to have found legal studies especially irksome—a contrast with the training and attitude of Coluccio Salutati, who studied Justinian’s *Institutes* intensely as part of his training in notarial art in Bologna (1348–50) and maintained, in his *De nobilitate legum et medicine*, that law is superior to medicine.<sup>9</sup> But one of the most notable fifteenth-century witnesses of the humanists’ dislike for the study of law comes from Leon Battista Alberti (1404–72). During the 1420s, Alberti was studying civil and canon law at the University of Bologna, and it was during this period that he wrote his famous *De commodis litterarum atque incommodis* or *On the Advantages and Disadvantages of Learning*. In this work, as also in his comedy *Philodoxeos fabula*, Alberti makes constant references to the physical and mental exhaustion that accompanies the study of law, in particular because of the field’s heavy emphasis on memorization.<sup>10</sup>

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aviditate imbuti sumus” (Leonardo Bruni, *Leonardo Bruni Arretini Epistolarum libri VIII ad fidem codicum mss. suppleti, et castigati* . . ., ed. L. Mehus [Florence, 1741], Book IV, chap. 20).

<sup>7</sup> For the Holy Roman Empire see Rainer C. Schwinges, *Deutsche Universitätsbesucher im 14. und 15. Jahrhundert: Studien zur Sozialgeschichte des alten Reiches* (Stuttgart, 1986); a more general picture in *idem*, “Student Education, Student Life,” in *A History of the University in Europe*, I, 195–243.

<sup>8</sup> For some general observations on the relationship of law and humanism see Witt, *Footsteps*, 92–93.

<sup>9</sup> On Salutati see Ronald G. Witt, *Hercules at the Crossroads: The Life, Works, and Thought of Coluccio Salutati* (Durham, N.C., 1983), 20–23 and 163–64.

<sup>10</sup> Francesco Zabarella would in fact have objected to Alberti’s depiction of law as a study challenging only because of its emphasis on memorization. His *De modo docendi et discendi ius canonicum et civilem*, written between 1400 and 1417, stresses rather different aspects of the law and insists that its study is far more complex than some imagine; see Thomas E. Morissey, “The Art of Teaching and Learning Law: A Late Medieval Tract,” *History of Universities*, 8 (1989), 27–74, especially 54–55. He represents one of the few exceptions to the aversion felt by many humanists to the study of law in the early fifteenth century.

Alberti, whose health was always rather frail, in fact had to interrupt his legal studies on several occasions, and he presents his literary productions as providing the relief and distraction necessary to bring his legal studies to completion. He is one of the few fifteenth-century examples we have of a first-rank humanist who was also a doctor of law—toward the end of the 1420s, he received his degree in canon law.<sup>11</sup>

Since Alberti was clearly unhappy with the demands that the study of law made on his energies, his decision to continue his studies may have been a strategy both to please his family and to gain independence from them: his father had died, and as an illegitimate son he could not hope to tear part of the inheritance away from his tight-fisted relatives. But again, it should be noted that Alberti vents his discontent against the study of law, and not against university studies in general. Indeed, Alberti's autobiography tells us that, during his law studies in Bologna, Alberti also dedicated himself to the study of philosophy and mathematics.<sup>12</sup> Although there is no direct evidence for Alberti's study of these subjects in the university, it is also unlikely that he would have rejected out of hand what the university had to offer. The Arts curriculum at the University of Bologna offered a three-year course of study in natural philosophy, emphasizing especially Aristotle's *Physics* but also other important works such as the *De anima* and *De coelo*. In addition, there was a regular teaching of Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*, even though this subject was an "elective" and was only offered on feast days. The most important teachings of mathematics (not arithmetic, which was taught in the schools) were covered in the university course on astrology, which included the writings of Euclid, Ptolemy, and Avicenna.<sup>13</sup> It is well known that Alberti's later works testify to a more than passing acquaintance with

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<sup>11</sup> The exact date and location of this degree are not known; see my forthcoming "Alberti e l'Università di Bologna negli anni Venti" for some hypotheses and for a discussion of his studies in Bologna.

<sup>12</sup> See Alberti's remarks in Riccardo Fubini and Anna Menci Gallorini, "L'autobiografia di Leon Battista Alberti: Studio e edizione," *Rinascimento*, 2nd ser., 12 (1972), 68–78, where reference is made to "phisica . . . atque mathematicae artes" (70); the alternate reading "philosophia" (for "phisica") is suggested in "*Philodoxeos fabula*. Edizione critica a cura di Lucia Cesarini Martinelli," *Rinascimento*, 2nd ser., 17 (1977), 112–13, n. 2 and Luca Boschetto, *Leon Battista Alberti e Firenze: Biografia, storia, letteratura* (Florence, 2000), 72.

<sup>13</sup> Carlo Malagola (ed.), *Statuti delle Università e dei Collegi dello Studio bolognese* (Bologna, 1888), 274–77; for a schematic table, see my *Aristotle's Ethics in the Italian Renaissance*, 87.

natural and moral philosophy, and that his use of mathematics takes its start from what his contemporaries would have learned at the university. Therefore it only seems reasonable not to assume too quickly that Alberti was dismissive of what was available at Bologna's most important cultural institution.

Such an assumption would be especially dangerous given what we know about some of the teachers active in Bologna's Arts faculty during Alberti's stay there. One of the important professors of natural and moral philosophy in Bologna was the humanist Andrea Biglia (ca. 1395–1435). Biglia was an Augustinian Hermit who came to Bologna after teaching moral philosophy for several years in Florence. He taught in Bologna from 1424–28, continuing his professorship in philosophy even after his degree in theology in 1425. In 1429 he moved to Siena, where he taught until his death six years later. Biglia was a very productive scholar; indeed, he wrote numerous commentaries and translations of Aristotle's works.<sup>14</sup> A study of these works remains a desideratum and might tell us more about his interests and teaching techniques; but, even though Alberti would doubtless have felt some kinship with Biglia's appreciation for the classics, this does not mean that he necessarily studied under his direction rather than that of the other capable philosophy teachers active at the same time, especially the Dominican lecturer Gaspare Sighicelli (d. 1457) and Giovanni Fornaci (d. after 1457).<sup>15</sup> It is also noteworthy that Francesco Filelfo (1389–1481) taught Greek and rhetoric in Bologna in 1427–28;<sup>16</sup> Alberti and Filelfo had already been together in Padua and doubtless knew each other, so Alberti might have had an extra incentive to follow courses at the university.

In addition to Bruni and Alberti, several other humanists pursued their studies at the university, often despising the courses in law that their parents were forcing them to take, but benefiting from many of the teachings in philosophy, rhetoric, and other subjects that were

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<sup>14</sup> For bibliography on Biglia see my *Aristotle's Ethics in the Italian Renaissance*, 484; and Chiara Verri, "Andrea Biglia de Mediolano" in *Compendium Auctorum Latinorum Medii Aevi*, Michael Lapidge et al. (eds.) (Tavernazzi, Impruneta, 2000–), I.3, 222–25.

<sup>15</sup> On Sighicelli and Fornaci see my *Aristotle's Ethics in the Italian Renaissance*, 403–4, nos. 31–32, and *idem*, "Natural Philosophy in Renaissance Italy: The University of Bologna and the Beginnings of Specialization," in *Early Science and Medicine*, 6.4 (2001), 289–90, nos. 46 and 50.

<sup>16</sup> Umberto Dallari (ed.), *I rotuli dei lettori legisti e artisti dello Studio di Bologna dal 1384 al 1799* (4 vols.; Bologna, 1888–1924), I, 56.

offered there. Petrarch studied for several years at the University of Bologna, where—between 1322 and his return to Avignon in 1326—he may have had contacts with Giovanni del Virgilio.<sup>17</sup> Also in Bologna, Salutati studied rhetoric with Pietro da Moglio (†1383), who was later a professor of rhetoric and poetry in the universities of Padua (from 1362) and Bologna (from 1368).<sup>18</sup> Coming to the fifteenth century, the dispute that took place in Florence's *studium* in 1455 as to who should replace Carlo Marsuppini may indeed have led Bracciolini to insist that many of the most eminent humanists to date had been autodidacts with little or no connection to university teachers,<sup>19</sup> but the earnestness with which the various parties campaigned for their particular candidate suggests that by this point many considered such a university appointment essential for students aspiring to be humanists.<sup>20</sup> In fact, humanists were increasingly not only students at the universities, but also professors. Not only were figures such as Chrysoloras, Biglia, and Filelfo active in the universities of Florence and Bologna, but many others, such as Gasparino Barzizza (1360–1431) in Padua, also derived their main income from university teaching. Even when university posts were turned down (as happened in 1351, when Petrarch declined the offer of the Florentine university, or much later when Giovanni Aurispa preferred to concentrate on private teaching rather than accepting an offer from the University of Siena)<sup>21</sup> these decisions were not necessarily motivated by an innate allergy for the university environment. Much more important were considerations of personal freedom (universities often restricted the movement of its faculty) and financial security (universities were infamous for late and partial payments of professors' wages).

A further deterrent may have been the fairly low salaries that were usually stipulated for professors of grammar and rhetoric. Although rhetoric eventually became—along with medicine and natural philosophy—one of the three most highly paid subjects in the Italian

<sup>17</sup> Witt, *Footsteps*, 236–39.

<sup>18</sup> Giuseppe Billanovich, "L'insegnamento della grammatica e della retorica nelle università italiane tra Petrarca e Guarino," in Jozef IJsewijn and Jacques Paquet (eds.), *The Universities in the Late Middle Ages* (Leuven, 1978), 365–80, especially 368–74; Avellini, "Università e umanesimo," 27; Witt, *Footsteps*, 292–94.

<sup>19</sup> Avellini, "Università e umanesimo," 25.

<sup>20</sup> On the controversy see especially Arthur Field, "The *Studium Florentinum* Controversy, 1455," *History of Universities*, 3 (1983), 31–60.

<sup>21</sup> Avellini, "Università e umanesimo," p. 24.

faculties of Arts and Medicine,<sup>22</sup> at the start of the fifteenth century its status was more uncertain. In 1415–16, for example, a teacher of logic in the Florentine *studium* earned around fl. 46, and a teacher of medicine fl. 120; although Giovanni Gherardi da Prato earned fl. 50 for his teaching of Dante, teachers of rhetoric and grammar earned fl. 35 and fl. 25 respectively.<sup>23</sup> In Bologna the records for 1407–08 show that a professor of medicine (Daniello da Santa Sofia) who earned L. 1280 was the most highly paid in the university's faculty of Arts and Medicine; of the teachers of rhetoric and/or grammar, the most highly paid was Bartolomeo da Napoli, who earned only L. 180.<sup>24</sup> The records for Padua suggest a similar situation: in 1430–31, Ugo Benzi was promised Duc. 550 for his teaching of medicine; by contrast, Antonio Picinino da Pergamo was hired at Duc. 70 for his teaching of rhetoric.<sup>25</sup> Understandably, salaries for teachers of grammar and rhetoric on the lower level (specified as *in civitate* or *pro quarterio* in several classes of documents) tended to be even lower than those teaching *in studio*.

The financial incentives for professors of rhetoric improved steadily during the fifteenth century.<sup>26</sup> In 1494–95, Bologna's *studium* counted five professors of rhetoric; the most highly paid among them was Filippo Beroaldo the Elder, who at L. 400 had a salary on par with that of Floriano di Cereoli, the most highly paid professor of philosophy. Among the professors of medicine, only Astorgio Morandi had a higher salary, of L. 500.<sup>27</sup> The situation was similar in Florence-

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<sup>22</sup> David A. Lines, "University Natural Philosophy in Renaissance Italy: The Decline of Aristotelianism?" in C. Leijenhorst, C. Lüthy, and J.M.M.H. Thijssen (eds.), *The Dynamics of Aristotelian Natural Philosophy* (Leiden, 2002), 323–42, especially 337, Table 1-B.

<sup>23</sup> Katherine Park, "The Readers at the Florentine *Studio* according to Comunal Fiscal Records (1357–1380, 1413–1446)," *Rinascimento*, n.s., 20 (1980), 274.

<sup>24</sup> Archivio di Stato di Bologna (henceforth ASB), Riformatori dello Studio, Quartironi degli stipendi, cart. 32 (1401–10), a. 1408.

<sup>25</sup> Elisabetta Barile, *Rotuli artistarum (1430–1815)*; unpublished typescript on the University of Padua, this information taken from Bib. Univ. Padova, MS 1675, II, 449.

<sup>26</sup> Grendler has rightly observed that "Humanistic studies had a far more important place in the Renaissance university than did grammar, rhetoric, and *ars dictaminis* in the fourteenth-century university" (Grendler, *The Universities of the Italian Renaissance*, 247).

<sup>27</sup> More complete information on the teachers and their salaries can be found in my electronic database *Teachers of Arts and Medicine in the Italian Universities, ca. 1350–1650*. The data for this year comes from ASB, Riformatori, Quartironi degli stipendi, cart. 33 (1465–97), folder XXIX.



Pisa: in 1493–94 (his last year of teaching in the Florentine *studium*) Angelo Poliziano's salary of fl. 450 per year was entirely respectable, even though it did not match the fl. 700 accorded to his colleague Luchino Gerlo da Pavia, who taught medicine in Pisa.<sup>28</sup>

But the case of Poliziano (1454–94) has significance beyond that of symbolizing the rise of rhetoric, since his philological acumen and familiarity with Greek were to inspire generations of humanists after him. Tellingly, Poliziano's teaching at the University of Florence-Pisa from 1480 to 1494 covered not only works of Latin authors such as Virgil, Ovid, Terence, and Juvenal, but also numerous Greek texts, from the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* to Aristotle's *Ethics* and works of logic.<sup>29</sup> It was, in fact, Poliziano's practice of reading from the original Greek that would come to characterize the teaching of many university teachers in the sixteenth century, from the famous philologists Pier Vettori and Marc-Antoine Muret to scholastic philosophers like Francesco Piccolomini in Padua. This too can be seen as a sign of the interaction between the universities and humanism: it was not only a matter of humanists' attending universities as students and teaching in them as professors, but of philological techniques spreading to the teachings of philosophy, medicine, and law, whether or not the teachers in question were card-carrying humanists. Even though distinctively humanist approaches did not necessarily become the rule in all fields (for example, in the Italian study of law), still the humanist emphasis on the original languages became a widely shared value, and in many places humanist assumptions came to undergird university teaching.

A striking example of this development can be seen in the study of philosophy.<sup>30</sup> Poliziano was among the first to teach the texts of Aristotelian philosophy unapologetically from the viewpoint of a grammarian (i.e., a philologist). But his teaching was also innovative because it was based on the assumption that his students could read

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<sup>28</sup> Armando F. Verde, O.P., *Lo studio fiorentino, 1473–1503. Ricerche e documenti* (5 vols.; Florence, 1973–94), I, 350.

<sup>29</sup> Grendler offers a prospectus in *The Universities of the Italian Renaissance*, 238; a detailed examination is offered by Lucia Cesarini Martinelli, "Poliziano professore allo studio fiorentino," in *La Toscana al tempo di Lorenzo il Magnifico: politica, economia, cultura, arte. Convegno di studi promosso dalle Università di Firenze, Pisa e Siena: 5–8 novembre 1992* (3 vols.; Pisa, 1996), II, 463–81.

<sup>30</sup> On this topic see Jill Kraye, "Philologists and Philosophers" in *eadem* (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Renaissance Humanism* (Cambridge, 1996), 142–60.

Greek, a departure from the usual university practice.<sup>31</sup> As might be expected, successive professors of *umanità* and *litterae graecae* followed Poliziano's example; in the sixteenth century, scholars such as Pier Vettori struggled with the philological problems of Aristotle's Greek text and provided new translations.<sup>32</sup> But the skill of reading the original languages soon became a *sine qua non* for professors in other fields as well. Any self-respecting professor of logic, moral philosophy, or natural philosophy would make references to the Greek text in his lectures. Indeed, by the sixteenth century instructors were expected to explain to their students why a particular translation was or was not accurate on a given point, and this required knowing the original text. Even though the moral philosophy lectures of John Argyropoulos in Florence already exhibit (at least in the version prepared for publication by Acciaiuoli) several hallmarks of this engagement with the Greek text,<sup>33</sup> the widespread use of these tools in philosophy came only considerably later, after Poliziano had made his mark.<sup>34</sup> But those acquainted with Greek were not necessarily humanists—much like Argyropoulos, they might simply be philosophers who wanted to have a better understanding of an author's arguments. The sixteenth-century Paduan debate between Francesco Zabarella and Francesco Piccolomini, for example, pitted against each other two philosophy professors who wanted to resolve a dispute about method partly through a constant appeal to the Greek text of the works of Aristotle and Galen.<sup>35</sup> So humanist techniques could be appropriated instrumentally, without necessarily subscribing to the humanist emphasis on classical literature, including poetry and rhetoric.

<sup>31</sup> On Poliziano's use of Greek in his lectures see my *Aristotle's Ethics in the Italian Renaissance*, 101–05; more in general on university teaching based on Greek texts, see Luca Bianchi, "Una caduta senza declino? Considerazioni sulla crisi dell'aristotelismo fra Rinascimento ed età moderna," in *idem*, *Studi sull'aristotelismo del Rinascimento* (Padua, 2003), 133–83, especially 180–83.

<sup>32</sup> See my "Ethics as Philology: A Developing Approach to Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* in Florentine Humanism," in Marianne Pade (ed.), *Renaissance Readings of the Corpus Aristotelicum* (Copenhagen, 2001), 27–42.

<sup>33</sup> Luca Bianchi, "Un commento 'umanistico' ad Aristotele. L'*Expositio super libros Ethicorum* di Donato Acciaiuoli," *Rinascimento*, n.s., 30 (1990), 25–55; reprinted in *idem*, *Studi sull'aristotelismo del Rinascimento*, 11–39.

<sup>34</sup> Anthony Grafton, "On the Scholarship of Politian and Its Context," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, 40 (1977), 150–88.

<sup>35</sup> For a survey of the debate see my "Il metodo dell'etica nella scuola padovana e la sua ricezione nei paesi d'oltralpe: M. Piccart e B. Keckermann" in Gregorio Piaia (ed.), *La presenza dell'aristotelismo padovano nella filosofia della prima modernità* (Padua, 2002), 319–48.

Finally, it should be recognized that the ties between humanists and universities were not limited to Italy: Jacques Lefèvre d'Étaples (1460–1536) and Denys Lambin (1519–72) were two among several notable humanists who taught at the University of Paris;<sup>36</sup> we are well informed on the activities of Melanchthon and other German humanists to reform the universities of their time;<sup>37</sup> and in cases such as Alcalá de Henares in Spain (first statutes, 1510),<sup>38</sup> entire universities were founded according to the humanist educational program. The Jesuit Collegio Romano (which opened in 1551) was an interesting amalgam of humanist teaching at the lower level (that of the humanities) and more traditional teaching during the following three-and-a-half years of philosophical studies.<sup>39</sup>

So far I have argued that there were numerous contacts between humanists and the fifteenth-century Italian universities, so that it makes little sense to discuss the two in isolation from each other. The rest of this paper will discuss in further detail other aspects of this relationship. In particular, one can ask how this relationship developed over time and whether it is possible to break it down in various stages; what facilitated the humanists' entrance into the universities; and how important the *studia humanitatis* actually were in changing the cultural landscape of the universities.

The realization that university and humanist cultures were not mutually exclusive has only lately begun to gain acceptance, so there have been few attempts to describe how the two interacted chronologically.<sup>40</sup> Generalizations can be devilishly difficult, since even neighboring universities often took very different approaches, worked on different timetables, had budgets of varying sizes, and had contrasting priorities. Nonetheless, the presence of humanists in the universities—whether as students or as teachers—can be dated to a fairly early period.

<sup>36</sup> For bibliography see Charles H. Lohr, *Latin Aristotle Commentaries* (2 vols. to date; Florence, 1988–), II, 138–42, 214–16.

<sup>37</sup> See, for example, Laetitia Boehm, "Humanistische Bildungsbewegung und mittelalterliche Universitätsverfassung: Aspekte zur frühneuzeitlichen Reformgeschichte der deutschen Universitäten," in *The Universities in the Late Middle Ages*, 315–46.

<sup>38</sup> Gabriel Codina Mir, S.J., *Aux sources de la pédagogie des Jésuits. Le "modus parisiensis"* (Rome, 1968), especially chap. 1.

<sup>39</sup> See, among others, Aldo Scaglione, *The Liberal Arts and the Jesuit College System* (Amsterdam, 1986).

<sup>40</sup> For the following, cf. Grendler, *The Universities of the Italian Renaissance*, pp. 205–22. Grendler distinguishes three stages: 1370–1425 ("humanists avoid the universities"), 1425–1450 ("humanists join the university") and 1450–1520 ("humanistic studies flourish").

The fourteenth century works well as a period of initial humanist activity in the universities. Quite apart from the studies of Petrarch, Salutati, and Bruni, this was the time in which one increasingly encounters professors of humanist inclination, as well as professors of Greek. This is true especially in the second half of the fourteenth century, with the influential teaching of figures such as Chrysoloras, Malpaghini, and Bartolomeo da Napoli, but also of Leonzio Pilato, who taught Greek in Florence at least in 1360–62.<sup>41</sup> Even more notable are the developments during the first quarter of the fifteenth century, for example with Andrea Biglia in Florence and with Gasparino Barzizza in Padua. It is especially in these two cities that various university posts start to be staffed by humanists at an early date.<sup>42</sup> If one wishes to use their cases as a standard, one could date the process of the humanists' joining the universities at least as early as the 1390s. But it should be remembered that universities did not proceed in synchrony on matters such as these.

For reasons to be explained below, this period of growing association with (and influence in) the universities was met fairly amicably by more traditionally oriented professors. Humanists were generally not thwarted in their teaching and other activities, and as their educational model became increasingly sought after, their status and salaries increased. By the early years of the sixteenth century, universities such as Bologna and Florence-Pisa tended to reduce somewhat the number of teachers of rhetoric and/or Greek, but on the other hand they paid much higher salaries to the teachers whose services they did retain.<sup>43</sup> By now the *studia humanitatis* were a well-established part of the university curriculum, and they continued to retain a place of great importance throughout the sixteenth century.

It is therefore important to underline that Grendler did not intend to suggest, by describing the period 1450–1520 as one of flourishing for the humanities, that the later period was one of decline. Grendler himself counters such a notion later in his book,<sup>44</sup> and rightly so,

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<sup>41</sup> Park, "The Readers of the Florentine *Studio*," 255–56.

<sup>42</sup> For Florence see especially Field, "The *Studium Florentinum* Controversy, 1455" and Davies, *Florence and Its University*.

<sup>43</sup> Examples for Florence-Pisa include Marcello del Virgilio, Cesare Strozzi, and Pier Vettori; for Bologna, Filippo Beroaldi and Achille Bocchi are among the best known.

<sup>44</sup> Grendler, *The Universities of the Italian Renaissance*, 229–36.

for the significant advances in philology and familiarity with Greek—due to a considerable extent to developments within the universities—point solidly in the opposite direction. It is no accident that the second half of the sixteenth century saw the teaching of important Hellenists such as Marc-Antoine Muret in Rome, Pompilio Amaseo and Carlo Sigonio in Bologna, and Francesco Robortello and Paolo Giovio in Padua.

But what facilitated the humanists' entrance into the universities in the first place? On this point several answers can be given. One important factor was surely the weakness of theological studies in the Italian universities. Faculties of theology were either weak or non-existent there and, as a result, in Italy there was not as much competition and resistance from theologians as there would be in northern Europe.<sup>45</sup> In universities such as Paris, in fact, it was common for the teachings in the Arts faculty to be given by bachelors of theology who were on their way to obtaining their doctorate.<sup>46</sup>

Another important factor was the career pattern in the Italian universities. In northern Europe a professor was regularly called upon to teach a wide variety of subjects, such as rhetoric, logic, natural and moral philosophy, metaphysics, and theology.<sup>47</sup> The Italian universities differed strikingly from this pattern. There was some continuity between philosophy and medicine, in the sense that teachers at universities like Bologna started by teaching logic and gradually made their way through natural and moral philosophy up to medicine, which for a long time represented the highest rung on the career ladder.<sup>48</sup> But professors of rhetoric were entirely excluded from this track in philosophy and medicine: they were to teach rhetoric and allied subjects alone. Professors of rhetoric therefore usually taught students whose main object was that of gaining a degree in the humanities, not in medicine or law. Since their discipline was

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<sup>45</sup> Grendler, *The Universities of the Italian Renaissance*, 247–48. Less easily verifiable is Grendler's argument (*ibid.*, 247) that humanist professors "found a congenial home in the university" and encountered little opposition there from other colleagues, since "the vast majority" of them had been educated by humanists before coming to the universities.

<sup>46</sup> On teaching as a mechanism of supporting advanced students see Schwinges, "Student Education, Student Life," 241.

<sup>47</sup> See the career sketches in Lohr, *Latin Aristotle Commentaries*, II, *passim*.

<sup>48</sup> The situation changed somewhat in the sixteenth century; see Lines, "Natural Philosophy in Renaissance Italy."

self-contained and they represented no threat to their colleagues in other fields, their presence in the universities did not cause great problems unless, like Poliziano, they decided to challenge disciplinary boundaries and teach, in addition to rhetoric, subjects such as logic and natural philosophy. Also, since students of medicine and law were required to be trained only minimally in matters such as rhetoric, there was little danger that they would become “infected” with humanist notions and therefore oppose the methods of the more traditional professors in their chosen fields. Such an occurrence would doubtless have given rise to a great deal of resentment.

Finally, it helped the humanists that in Italy the appointment of professors was mostly in the hands of people sympathetic to them. In Italy, the business of running a university and increasing its reputation was usually the brief of a committee of citizens (in Bologna, for example, the *Riformatori dello Studio* and the *Assunti dello Studio*; in Florence, the *Ufficiali dello Studio*).<sup>49</sup> It was not unusual for a committee of this kind to be in charge of the negotiations to poach a well-known star from a competing university. The men chosen for these committees often came from wealthy families and had benefited from a humanist education themselves. They were therefore already well disposed toward the humanists and open to rewarding them handsomely, without however forgetting that it was equally important to have famous professors of philosophy, medicine, and law. An equally forceful guidance was possible when universities were under the patronage of important political families who wanted to encourage humanists (as was the case for, among others, the universities of Florence-Pisa, Pavia, and Ferrara), or when a particular pope or his legate wanted to favor a humanist direction in the universities of the Papal territories.

Having commented on the period in which humanism affected the universities and the factors that facilitated its entrance there, let us now evaluate the importance of humanism for the universities. An overall assessment is hard to deliver, even after Grendler’s splendid chapter on the *studia humanitatis* in his recent book.<sup>50</sup> Numerous questions remain in need of answers: Were the universities shaken out of a state of torpor and energized by the arrival of humanism?

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<sup>49</sup> For a study of the *Ufficiali dello Studio* in Florence see Davies, *Florence and Its University*, 9–19.

<sup>50</sup> Grendler, *The Universities of the Italian Renaissance*, chap. 6.

To what extent was the productivity of the universities during the Renaissance due to the activities of the humanists versus other factors? Or are these matters that one has to answer on a case-by-case basis, depending on the specific discipline, the local situation, or the specific time period?

Studies by numerous scholars during the past generation have challenged the notion that the Renaissance universities were cultural backwaters, or that they instinctively resisted new ideas and approaches. Charles Schmitt pointed to significant contributions by the universities in areas such as medicine, botany, and mathematics;<sup>51</sup> Roy Porter insisted that the “Scientific Revolution” could hardly have gained acceptance without the universities’ influence.<sup>52</sup> According to William Wallace, Galileo’s breakthroughs in physics and mathematics owed a great deal to the work of Jesuits teaching in the Collegio Romano and elsewhere.<sup>53</sup> Nancy Siraisi has underlined developments in anatomy and medicine,<sup>54</sup> while Jill Krave has shown that Aristotelianism did not necessarily have a monopoly on philosophy teaching in the universities, since Platonism was also taught occasionally.<sup>55</sup> Grendler’s work has highlighted developments in a number of different subjects taught in the universities.<sup>56</sup> But one question that commonly remains unanswered is who or what was responsible for the changes that took place. Was it humanism that rejuvenated the universities so that change became possible? Was scholasticism more creative than is usually thought and more open to different suggestions? Were there structural, fiscal, or political factors that encouraged new directions among university professors?

The case for humanism as a factor of renewal is compelling. As I have argued elsewhere,<sup>57</sup> it was no small thing to have provided

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<sup>51</sup> Charles B. Schmitt, “Science in the Italian Universities in the Sixteenth and Early Seventeenth Centuries,” in *The Emergence of Science in Western Europe*, ed. M. P. Crosland (London, 1975), 35–56; reprinted in Charles B. Schmitt, *The Aristotelian Tradition and Renaissance Universities* (London, 1984), item XIV.

<sup>52</sup> Roy Porter, “The Scientific Revolution and the Universities,” in *A History of the University in Europe*, II (1995): *Universities in Early Modern Europe*, 530–62.

<sup>53</sup> William A. Wallace, *Galileo and His Sources: The Heritage of the Collegio Romano in Galileo’s Science* (Princeton, 1984).

<sup>54</sup> Among other contributions, see Nancy G. Siraisi, *Medieval and Early Renaissance Medicine: An Introduction to Knowledge and Practice* (Chicago, 1990).

<sup>55</sup> Jill Krave, “La filosofia nelle università italiane del XVI secolo,” in Cesare Vasoli (ed.), *Le filosofie del Rinascimento* (Milan, 2002), 350–73, especially 363–65.

<sup>56</sup> Grendler, *The Universities of the Italian Renaissance*.

<sup>57</sup> Lines, *Aristotle’s Ethics in the Italian Renaissance*, 388–89.

fresh translations of Greek works of philosophy, literature, or science and to have made these and other works available in corrected printed editions. Connected with this effort was a renewed acquaintance with important authors of antiquity (such as Plato, Epicurus, Tacitus) who had been heretofore neglected, but who would play a decisive role in undermining the fifteenth-century worldview and ushering in various features of early modern thought. Indeed, the acquaintance with a broader range of sources and the uncovering of significant errors in manuscript transmission weakened the foundations of long-cherished assumptions.<sup>58</sup> Nor were the stylistic preoccupations of the humanists mere pedantry, since they were part of a larger vision of how to recapture the virtues of ancient Rome. Especially in the fifteenth century, the union of wisdom and eloquence was one of the most notable features of the humanist movement; that language and morals went hand in hand was a truism that many shared. Finally, various humanist premises had the potential of turning the practice of education upside down on all levels. Their often-voiced assertion that the study of the humanities was superior to that of philosophy, medicine, or law directly challenged the hierarchy of studies in the universities. Their insistence that any interested person should be able to study philosophy<sup>59</sup> made a mockery of the long years of study invested by scholastic thinkers in the study and development of a specialized terminology. Their emphasis on the value of reading sources in the original languages pointed to deficiencies in the standard educational programs.

Both professors and university officials were well aware of the significance of the humanist challenge. Jointly, they paid it the ultimate compliment of stealing its ideas and hiring its proponents. As mentioned earlier, it soon became fashionable for professors to demonstrate their competence in the Greek language by referring to the original text in their lectures. Furthermore, lecturers on Aristotelian works displayed their learning by comparing Aristotle's ideas with those of Plato and other thinkers. Although philosophy lectures were not necessarily exercises in polished golden-age Latin, humanist orations did grace the ceremonies that opened the academic year, and

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<sup>58</sup> See the illuminating comments in relationship to Joseph Scaliger in Anthony Grafton, "Civic Humanism and Scientific Scholarship at Leiden" in *idem, Bring Out Your Dead: The Past as Revelation* (Cambridge, Mass., 2001), 118–37, especially 135–37.

<sup>59</sup> See, on this point, my *Aristotle's Ethics in the Italian Renaissance*, 206–14.



an eloquent *praelectio* came to be expected when a professor started teaching his yearly university course.<sup>60</sup> The humanities were never able to compete with the professional subjects (such as law and medicine) in terms of salaries or student appeal, but humanist teachers were delighted to see that their services were widely sought after. During the sixteenth century, for example, the University of Pisa recruited Ciriaco Strozzi away from Bologna, where he was teaching Greek, and the University of Bologna did its best to hire humanists of international fame, such as Justus Lipsius and Pompeo Amaseo.

One could, of course, interpret the evidence more cynically: perhaps the universities were, in effect, buying the humanists off, neutralizing the menace by incorporating it into the establishment. Perhaps professors shrouded themselves in humanist garb only in order to appear more attuned to the times, whether to students or potential employers. More pointedly, humanists were hardly the only ones whom universities actively sought to recruit: they were, in fact, interested in any famed scholar who would bring additional students (and thereby luster and revenue) to a city. But one should be wary of theories of conspiracy and hypocrisy: it seems more likely that humanism—or, at least, various aspects of it—really did seem appealing to students, professors, and administrators; they saw no incongruity with its presence in the universities, and many humanist professors were happy to have found employment there. That humanism heightened, at the university level, the appreciation for ancient grammar and rhetoric and for scholarship of the classical world is both undeniable and significant.<sup>61</sup> That its influence reached beyond the traditional core of its subjects (grammar, rhetoric, poetry, history, and moral philosophy)<sup>62</sup> to affect the study and practice of philosophy, medicine, law, and theology had incalculable consequences.

But while the significance of humanism is beyond question, it seems improbable to applaud it alone for having revitalized the universities. Indeed, one might legitimately ask whether the universities really were in need of renewal, and if so, in what sense. During the

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<sup>60</sup> Several important *praelectiones* are found in Karl Müllner (ed.), *Reden und Briefe Italienischer Humanisten* (Vienna, 1899); reprinted with introduction, bibliography and indices by Hanna Barbara Gerl (Munich, 1970).

<sup>61</sup> This consideration is, of course, independent of evaluations of the humanists' actual success in fields such as classical philology. This debate need not concern us here.

<sup>62</sup> For this classic formulation see Kristeller, "Humanism and Scholasticism," 92.

thirteenth and fourteenth centuries the European universities had experienced impressive numerical growth (going from around six *studia* at the beginning of the thirteenth century to some thirty-nine by the end of the fourteenth century),<sup>63</sup> but had also been brilliant cultural centers in numerous areas, including theology, law, and natural philosophy. More specifically in Italy, universities such as Bologna and Padua had continued to make important contributions, for example in medicine.<sup>64</sup> Studies of mathematics in fifteenth-century Bologna were advanced enough that they probably influenced both Leon Battista Alberti and Copernicus. The ravages of the Black Death were only a temporary setback, and it is significant that the universities of Florence and Ferrara were founded not long after its occurrence (respectively in 1351 and 1391). Continuous data for the fourteenth century (and, in the case of Padua, even for the fifteenth century) has not always survived, but financial records I have discovered for fourteenth-century Bologna do not seem to portray a university going through a deep crisis. It is therefore probably more accurate to think of humanism as somehow having helped the universities continue to grow, rather than having cured their illnesses and caused them to bud.

The argument is sometimes made (tacitly, if not explicitly) that scholasticism was the main pest that afflicted the universities. According to this viewpoint, scholasticism was a rigid movement made up of small-minded men who (not unlike modern university administrators) were interested mainly in defending the status quo and increasing their own power while engaging in games of logic and fatuous rhetoric. They were—so the story goes—slavishly devoted to upholding Aristotle's authority, and by the fifteenth century if not earlier had lost any creativity they might have enjoyed earlier with the Oxford Calculators. According to this view, the humanists were therefore quite justified in making them the targets of various attacks, such as Petrarch's *De sui ipsius atque multorum ignorantia*. The educational system that the scholastics promoted was, after all, outmoded, unpractical, and focused on quibbles in logic.

But this portrayal of the scholastics is quite unfair. Like the humanists, scholastic thinkers did not subscribe to any particular programmatic statement, even though they shared many assumptions. Their movement

<sup>63</sup> Jacques Verger, "Patterns," in *A History of the University in Europe*, I, 62–63.

<sup>64</sup> See, for example, Nancy G. Siraisi, *Arts and Sciences at Padua: The Studium of Padua before 1350* (Toronto, 1973); *eadem*, *Taddeo Alderotti and His Pupils: Two Generations of Italian Medical Learning* (Princeton, 1981).

was a variegated one, which (again like humanism) developed over time. Their slavish attitude with regard to Aristotle has been overemphasized.<sup>65</sup> Although they had considerable respect for the speculative sciences (such as natural philosophy and theology) they also studied practical subjects such as ethics.<sup>66</sup> And it has been argued (correctly, I think) that the scholastic approach to education was at times considerably more creative and critical than the humanist one.<sup>67</sup>

In the Italian universities, scholastics continued their investigation into problems of philosophy, medicine, and law that had yielded such considerable fruits in the preceding centuries. Professors of philosophy such as Pomponazzi and Nicoletto Vernia, for example, contributed a great deal to the development of natural philosophy even apart from humanist influence. For every important professor of humanist tendencies (for example, Ugo Benzi or Alessandro Achillini in Bologna) one can think of at least another equally important professor of scholastic training. The production of commentaries and treatises by these professors increased remarkably during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, indicating that scholasticism was by no means dead, even though it was increasingly married with humanist methodologies.

Much of the scholarship on the intellectual life of Renaissance Italy has focused on the presumed dichotomy between humanism and scholasticism without paying enough attention to other factors, including social, fiscal, religious, and political considerations that may have affected the development of university culture. In an age in which most scholars have abandoned the acrimonious debates of earlier decades on the nature and worth of humanism and have turned their attention elsewhere, it is possible that these avenues of exploration will be traveled more often. One interesting angle is offered by the intervention of the popes in the affairs of universities such as Rome and Bologna. It is clear that, especially in the case of Bologna, papal legates and vice-legates were active in promoting curricular reform and other measures aimed at improving university life, but

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<sup>65</sup> Scholarship correcting this stereotype includes Schmitt, *Aristotle and the Renaissance* (Cambridge, Mass., 1983) and Bianchi, "'Aristotele fu un uomo e poté errare': sulle origini medievali della critica al 'principio di autorità,'" in *Studi sull'aristotelismo del Rinascimento*, 101–24.

<sup>66</sup> Georg Wieland, *Ethica—Scientia practica: Die Anfänge der philosophischen Ethik im 13. Jahrhundert* (Münster, 1981).

<sup>67</sup> Anthony Grafton and Lisa Jardine, *From Humanism to the Humanities: Education and the Liberal Arts in Fifteenth- and Sixteenth-Century Europe* (London, 1986).

these initiatives have not been studied in any detail.<sup>68</sup> One wonders to what extent motivations of political or religious power lay behind the numerous bulls and decrees that were issued for sixteenth-century Bologna, and whether upheavals in social conditions or variations in the size of budgets also played a role in the changes that took place. Further research in these areas should yield a layer of “thick description” that university history has sadly lacked up to this point.

In conclusion, humanism enjoyed a fruitful interaction with the Italian universities. Already from the second half of the fourteenth century humanists were teaching there, and it became increasingly common to be able to study Greek and classical Latin within the university context. The interaction lasted a long time, even after various local academies had established themselves as an alternative (and sometimes competing) venue for discussion and research. A number of factors made the entrance of humanism into the universities fairly uncomplicated; among these was the practice of keeping the teaching of grammar and rhetoric separate from that of philosophy and medicine, so that humanist teachers were not perceived as threats to the more conservative professors. In fact, humanism ended up affecting the approach to learning in all kinds of different contexts—not only in the Arts faculty, but also beyond it, in the study of law, medicine, and theology. Humanism was not, however, the only harbinger of new things. The ability of scholastic thinkers to approach problems from new perspectives and to come to different solutions must also be appreciated, even though the hard slog of studying their positions (which are often buried in the bowels of intricate and rare commentaries or teaching notes) has just begun. It is a work whose time is long overdue, but which should greatly enrich our understanding of the culture of the universities of the Italian Renaissance.

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<sup>68</sup> I am examining this topic within the context of a broader monograph on the curricular changes in the University of Bologna’s Arts program from the fifteenth to the seventeenth centuries.

## CHAPTER FOURTEEN

### HUMANIST CULTURE AND ITS MALCONTENTENTS: ALCIONIO, SEPÚLVEDA, AND THE CONSEQUENCES OF TRANSLATING ARISTOTLE\*

Kenneth Gouwens and Christopher S. Celenza

The 1520s looked at first to be an auspicious decade for the aspiring humanist Pietro Alcionio (1490s?–1528).<sup>1</sup> Previously, his career in Venice, where he had studied under the famous scholar of Greek, Marcus Musurus (d. 1517), had been marked by great promise that had yet to be fulfilled.<sup>2</sup> In a letter of 1518 to Erasmus, Ambrogio Leoni, a friend of the publisher Aldo Manuzio, had identified Alcionio as a leading candidate to succeed Musurus in holding Venice’s public lectureship in Greek, lauding him in glowing terms:

He has translated several orations of Isocrates and Demosthenes with such great *Arpinitas* that you seem to be reading Cicero himself. He has rendered many of Aristotle’s pieces into Latin so lucidly that Latium, boastful, can say “Behold, we possess Aristotle as our own.”<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> On Alcionio’s life and works see the convenient summary by Mario Rosa, “Alcionio (Alcyonius), Pietro,” *Dizionario biografico degli italiani* [henceforth *DBI*], II (1960), 77–80. For further detail, see Kenneth Gouwens, *Remembering the Renaissance: Humanist Narratives of the Sack of Rome* (Leiden, 1998), 31–72; and George Hugo Tucker, *Homo Viator: Itineraries of Exile, Displacement and Writing in Renaissance Europe* (Geneva, 2003), 153–94 (Part III, chap. 1: “Writing on Exile: Petrus Alcyonius (1487–1528?), an Exile in the Republic of Letters”).

<sup>2</sup> The earliest mention of Alcionio to come to light thus far appears in a letter of 1516 from John Watson to Erasmus, published in Desiderius Erasmus, *Opus Epistolarum Des. Erasmi Roterodami*, ed. P. S. Allen (12 vols.; Oxford, 1906–58) [henceforth abbreviated as *EE*], II, 315 (lett. 450). Watson describes him in passing as “Petrus Halcionius, meo iudicio egregie facundus.”

<sup>3</sup> *EE*, III, 55–56 (lett. 854). The entire reference to Alcionio runs as follows: “Atque inter eorum elegantiores unus Petrus Alcyonius multa e Graeco in Romanum

A decade before publishing the *Ciceronianus* (1528), with its disparaging view of writers hamstrung by excessive adherence to Cicero in vocabulary and style, Erasmus could still muster enthusiasm about such a report: he responded to Leoni that he would write Alcionio, and expressed his desire to see the latter's translations.<sup>4</sup> In the event, Erasmus appears never to have written the promised letter, and another promising scholar, Vettore Fausto, was chosen to succeed Musurus. But at last, in April of 1521, Alcionio published a volume comprising several translations of Aristotle, including among other works the *De generatione et interitu*, and ten books from the philosopher's writings about animals, which he dedicated to the Genoese statesman, military leader, and courtier Ottaviano Fregoso.<sup>5</sup>

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sermonem elegantissime vertit. Nam orationes plerasque Isocratis ac Demosthenis tanta Arpinitate expressit ut Ciceronem ipsum nihilominus legere videaris; Aristotelis multa vertit tam candide ut Latium gloriabundum dicere possit, En Aristotelem nostrum habemus. Idem ipse iuuenis, ut est literarum optimarum vtrarumque maximus alumnus, ita tui quoque amantissimus ac studiorum tuorum laudator summus." Neither the Isocrates nor the Demosthenes is known to have been published, nor does either appear to have survived in manuscript form.

<sup>4</sup> *EE*, III, 56–61 (lett. 868; 15 October [1518]): "Pergratum est Petri Alcyonii per te novisse nomen; utinam et lucubrations hominis videre liceret, praesertim quae vertit ex Aristotele! Cupio totum hominem propius nosse, praesertim cum nostra non aspernetur: quod haud faceret, ni foret ingenio longe candidissimo. Lacessam eum alias literis meis; nunc viro meis verbis dices salutem."

<sup>5</sup> Aristotle, *Habes hoc in codice lector Aristotelis libros De generatione & interitu duos, Meteoron, hoc est sublimium quatuor, De mundo ad Alexandrum Macedoniae regem unum contra L. Appuleii interpretationem, ex opere De animalibus decem, quorum primus est De Communi Animalium gressu, secundum De sensu, & sensilibus, vel potius de communibus animae, & corporis functionibus. Tertius De memoria & reminiscencia, Quartus De somno et vigilia, Quintus De somniis et imaginibus, Sextus De praesensione secundum quietem, septimus De communi animalium motu, octavus De diurnitate, & brevitate vitae, nonus De vita, & obitu, decimus De spiratione*, tr. Pietro Alcionio (Venice, 1521). *De incessu animalium* (along with *De motu animalium*) variously formed part of two separate corpora of Aristotelian texts (dating back to their incorporation into two different 1304 sets of *peciae* at the University of Paris): the first, known as *De animalibus*, included the *Historia animalium*, *De incessu animalium*, *De motu animalium*, *De partibus animalium*, and *De generatione animalium*; the second, in addition to *De incessu animalium* and *De motu animalium*, included the "physiological" texts of what became known later as the *Parva naturalia*, i.e., *De longitudine et brevitate vitae*, *De iuventute et senectute*, *De spiratione*, and *De morte*. See P. De Leemans, "The vicissitudes of a zoological treatise: Aristotle's *De incessu animalium* in the Middle Ages and Renaissance," in *Tradition et traduction: Les textes philosophiques et scientifiques grecs au Moyen Age latin*, ed. Rita Beyers et al. (Leuven, 1999), 199–218, at 206–8; for Alcionio and Sepúlveda see 214. Alcionio's 1521 volume includes a published privilege from Pope Leo X, written by papal secretary Pietro Bembo, dated 27 May 1520. The *De generatione & interitu* is dedicated to Pope Leo X; *Meteoron* to "Antonium Pratum"; *De mundo* to Federico Gonzaga, the marquis of Mantua; and all of *De animalibus* (10 books) to Ottaviano Fregoso. In the copy at Stanford University, the dedicatory letter to Girolamo Negri accompanies the translation of Philoponus's *Vita*

The following year, Alcionio produced what remains his best-known work, the *Medices legatus: de exsilio*.<sup>6</sup> A Ciceronian dialogue set in the Medici palace in Rome in 1512, the work took its name from the service of Giovanni de' Medici (the future Pope Leo X) as papal legate for Julius II. Dedicated to Nikolaus von Schönberg, archbishop of Capua and close friend of Cardinal Giulio de' Medici, the *De exsilio* both reflected and solidified Alcionio's position as a Medicean client. Also in 1522, he moved to Medici-controlled Florence, where the Signoria engaged him as a teacher of Greek, and where he also received a stipend from Cardinal Giulio to translate Galen's *De usu partium*.<sup>7</sup> At last, Alcionio's career appeared to be taking flight.

But not all was well: that same year, his Aristotle translations came under direct attack from the prominent Spanish scholar Juan Ginés de Sepúlveda (1490–1573). Known widely today for a later polemic in which he asserted that the Indians of the New World were natural slaves, Sepúlveda in the early 1520s was well along in his formal training as an interpreter of Aristotle.<sup>8</sup> Originally from Cordoba, he had gone to Bologna in 1515 to study at the Spanish College. Among his teachers at the university there was the distinguished Aristotelian philosopher Pietro Pomponazzi.<sup>9</sup> While in Bologna, Sepúlveda also established ties with two wealthy Italian patrons: Alberto Pio, prince of Carpi, who would be his consistent Maecenas

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of Aristotle. Another copy of Alcionio's collection, inaccessible at the time of this writing, is in the Vatican Library, R.I. II.829. The work that Alcionio titles *De generatione et interitu* had traditionally been known to readers of Latin as *De generatione et corruptione*, but over the course of the sixteenth century came to be known in humanist renditions as *De ortu et interitu*. See Charles B. Schmitt, *Aristotle and the Renaissance* (Cambridge, Mass., 1983), 86, including mention of Alcionio and the variant of the title that he used. It should also be noted that *De animalibus* has been used by various scholars to refer to different portions of Aristotle's writings about animals.

<sup>6</sup> Pietro Alcionio, *Medices legatus: de exsilio* (Venice, 1522); G. Brunelli, "Fregoso, Ottaviano," *DBI*, L (1998), 424–27.

<sup>7</sup> *Lettere di Principi*, ed. G. Ruscelli (Venice, 1570) [henceforth *LP*], fol. 99v (Negri to Michiel, 1 Sept. 1523): "L'Alcionio traduce Galeno de partibus ad instantia del Cardinal de' Medici, & per questo li dà provisione di dieci ducati il mese, oltre la condotta."

<sup>8</sup> *Apologia de Juan Ginés de Sepúlveda contra Fray Bartolome de las Casas y de Fray Bartolome de las Casas contra Juan Ginés de Sepúlveda*, tr. Angel Losada (Madrid, 1975). Sepúlveda argues, on Aristotelian grounds, that the Indians are not fully human.

<sup>9</sup> Charles B. Schmitt, "Alberto Pio and the Aristotelian Studies of His Time," in *Società, politica e cultura a Carpi ai tempi di Alberto III Pio* (2 vols.; Padua, 1981), I, 43–64, at 61. See also Schmitt, *Aristotle and the Renaissance* (Cambridge, Mass., 1983), 73.

in the years 1522–27; and Cardinal Giulio de' Medici, whom he credited with having first prodded him to render Aristotle into Latin.<sup>10</sup> And therein lay the rub: for when Alcionio's collection of Aristotelian translations appeared in 1521, Sepúlveda had already long been laboring on his own rendition of some of the same materials. Sensing that he had been scooped, he propelled his own translations into print, and the volume appeared in March 1522—less than a year after Alcionio's had been published—accompanied by a dedicatory letter to Alberto Pio.<sup>11</sup>

Sepúlveda did not stop there: he also published a tract devoted expressly to highlighting Alcionio's mistakes and infelicities, entitled *Errata P. Alcyonii in interpretatione Aristotelis*.<sup>12</sup> The humanist Christophe de Longueil (1488–1522), himself later one of the targets of Erasmus's *Ciceronianus*, expressed mild amusement at Alcionio's predicament, and upon the publication of the *Errata* he promptly wrote to a friend in Venice:

If it seems proper to you, you will point this out to Alcionio, or at least take care that it be indicated by others. But if I know you well, you yourself will point it out, so that you may see the look on his face in response to the news of so great an affront: one spectacle for which of course I greatly envy you!<sup>13</sup>

By late summer of 1523, the story was circulating in a somewhat embellished form: on 1 September, Girolamo Negri wrote from Rome to his friend Marcantonio Michiel in Venice that a certain Spaniard

<sup>10</sup> Alejandro Coroleu, "The *Fortuna* of Juan Ginés de Sepúlveda's Translations of Aristotle and of Alexander of Aphrodisias," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, 59 (1996), 325–32, at 325.

<sup>11</sup> *Libri Aristotelis quos vulgo Latini parvos naturales appellant e Graeco in Latinum sermonem conversi, Ioanne Genesis de Sepúlveda Cordubensi interprete* (Bologna, 1522). Schmitt, "Alberto Pio," 61, n. 64, notes that the letter to Pio, dated 23 March 1522, appears on fols. AA[bis]–AA2v.

<sup>12</sup> *Errata P. Alcyonii in interpretatione Aristotelis* (Bologna, 1522).

<sup>13</sup> Longolius, *Lucubrationes . . . Epistolarum libri IIII* (Lyon, 1542), 387 (to Ottaviano Grimaldi, dated 23 March 1522): "Hoc, si tibi videbitur, Alcyonio significabis, aut per alios certe denuntiandum ei curabis. Sed si bene te novi, ipse tu denuntiabis, ut hominis ad tantae contumeliae nuntium, vultum videas: quod unum sane spectaculum tibi magnopere invideo." Tucker cites an earlier letter to Grimaldi, dated 18 February, in which Longueil mentions Sepúlveda's plans to publish the *Errata*: "Illud quidem meum, esse Bononiae Hispanum hominem quendam, qui a se omnia Petr. Alcyonii in faciendo Aristotele latino errata collecta esse, ac propediem editum iri huc scripserit. de quo ipso, si tibi videbitur Alcyonium nostrum faces certiore, & simul hominem meis verbis salutabis" (Tucker, *Homo Viator*, 178–79, at 179, n. 55).



had collected Alcionio's translation errors and published a little book (*un libretto*) of them. According to Negri, the mortified Alcionio had tried to reduce the book's circulation by purchasing all the copies he could, but the Spaniard planned to have another run printed.<sup>14</sup> This anecdote later received influential validation from Paolo Giovio who, in his *Elogia virorum illustriorum* (1546), retold the story, emphasizing the shortcomings of Alcionio's translations, the positive reception of Sepúlveda's *Errata* in the scholarly community, and the expense to which Alcionio had been forced to go to buy the copies of the *Errata*, which he then proceeded to burn.<sup>15</sup> In our own age of electronic scanning and the internet, such an effort at suppression could scarcely be imagined to succeed. Yet until recently, no copies of the *Errata* were known to have survived—a fact which, combined with Giovio's authoritative account, led scholars to suspect that Alcionio had in fact managed to destroy all the evidence.<sup>16</sup> Only in the 1990s did a single copy of the *Errata* at last come to notice in the Biblioteca Marciana in Venice.<sup>17</sup>

<sup>14</sup> *LP*, fol. 99v (Negri to Michiel, 1 Sept. 1523): "Uno Spagnuolo, non però lo Stunica, ha tolto la gatta con l'Alcionio, et raccolto tutti gli errori delle tradottioni dell'Alcionio, et ne ha stampato un libretto in Bologna. L'Alcionio ha comprato tutti quei libri, ma lo Spagnuolo li vuol far ristampare."

<sup>15</sup> "Quum aliqua ex Aristotele perperam insolenterque vertisset, in eum Sepúlveda, vir hispanus, egregie de literis meritus, edito volumine peracuta iacula contorsit, non hercle indigna tanti philosophi vulneribus, si vindictae nomine merita poena mulcicaretur, tanto quidem eruditorum applausu, ut Alcyonius, ignominiae dolore misere consternatus, hispani hostis libros in tabernis ut concremaret gravi pretio coëmere cogereetur." Paolo Giovio, *Gli elogi*, ed. Renzo Merzagazzi (Rome, 1972), 133.

<sup>16</sup> On unsuccessful searches for copies of the *Errata*, see Angel Losada, *Juan Ginés de Sepúlveda: A Traves de su "Epistolario" y Nuevos Documentos* (Madrid, 1949), 388–89.

<sup>17</sup> J. G. Sepúlveda, *Libri Aristotelis, quos vulgo latini, parvos naturales appellant; Errata P. Alcyonii in interpretatione Aristotelis, a Ioanne Genesio Sepúlveda Cordubensi collecta* (Bologna, 1522). Its call number in the Fondi Antichi of the Biblioteca Marciana is: 136.D.34.2 (Tucker, *Homo Viator*, 156, n. 9, gives it incorrectly as 134.d.36). The *Errata P. Alcyonii* appears toward the middle of this volume, immediately before Sepúlveda's translation into Latin of Aristotle's *De incessu animalium*. It is nine folios long, with a two-folio preface to Alberto Pio. A formal colophon is lacking, but the last page of the text is dated "Anno gratie M.D.XXII. die vero. xxviii. Martii." Gouwens found the text, in 1992, and he announced the find in a paper delivered at the annual meeting of the Renaissance Society of America, held in New York in 1995. Evidently also in the 1990s, Julián Solana located the same text, announcing his find at the Tenth International Congress of Neo-Latin Studies, held in Avila in 1997: see Julián Solana-Pujalte, "Los *Errata Petri Alcyonii in interpretatione libri Aristotelis de incessu animalium* de Juan Gines de Sepúlveda: obra quemada, no impresa o no publicada?," *Acta Conventus Neo-Latini Albulensis*, ed. Rhoda Schnur et al. (Tempe, 2000), 597–602.

In part because of the publication in 1523 of Niccolò Leonico Tomeo's influential translations of the same books from Aristotle's works on animals (i.e., the *Parva naturalia* plus *De incessu* and *De motu*), Alcionio's renditions have fallen into comparative obscurity.<sup>18</sup> But now, the re-emergence of the *Errata* provides an opportunity to revisit with more precision both the translations and the fuss they occasioned, to see what these may tell us of the values, rivalries, and aspirations that characterized humanistic culture in Italy in the 1520s. A close reading of the *Errata* may aid, in turn, our understanding of learned discussions in the early Cinquecento about the models of expression and behavior that Italian humanists and courtiers sought to emulate—discussions to which far more prominent figures, including Francesco Berni and Baldassare Castiglione, would make important contributions later in that same decade. If the imitation of Cicero's perfect orator, both in literary style and in character, superintended those discussions, the ground rules of imitation were no more stable than the political situation on the Italian peninsula in the tumultuous 1520s.

The pages that follow will assess, first of all, Alcionio's strategy of self-presentation in the letters that accompanied the translations, and in particular the missive dedicating the books on animals to Ottaviano Fregoso. Next we provide a brief description of Sepúlveda's background and training, and an analysis of the dedicatory letter to Alberto Pio in which he criticizes Alcionio's letter to Fregoso. Third,

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<sup>18</sup> Rosa, "Alcionio," 78, suggests that Tomeo's edition, published by the same house (Vitali), rapidly eclipsed that of Alcionio. It is worth noting, however, that at least some of Alcionio's translations were frequently reprinted. For example, a collection of Latin renderings of Aristotle which was published in France three decades later includes Alcionio's translations of *De communi animalium gressu* (= *De incessu*) and *De communi animalium motu*, alongside several other translations by Theodore Gaza: *Aristotelis et Theophrasti Historiae: cum de natura animalium, tum de plantis & earum causis, cuncta fere, quae Deus opt. max. homini contemplanda exhibuit, ad amussim complectentes* . . . (Lyons, 1552), of which Harvard's Houghton Library has a copy. Already in 1524, some of Alcionio's translations had been reprinted in Paris, again alongside others by Gaza: *In hoc volumine haec continentur Aristotelis De Historia animalium libri ix. De partibus animalium & earum causis libri iiii. De generatione animalium libri v. De communi animalium gressu liber i. De communi animalium motu liber . . .* (Paris, 1524). This opportunistic republication indicates the general ineffectiveness of the *privilegio decennale* that Alcionio had obtained both from the Venetian Senate and from Pope Leo X. It also indicates that Alcionio had at least limited success in getting his translations to stand alongside those of Theodore Gaza, even if their stature was not quite so imposing. Cf. the frequency of Alcionio's appearance in a recent finding-list of Latin translations of Aristotle: F. Edward Cranz, *A Bibliography of Aristotle Editions, 1501–1600*, 2d ed., rev. by Charles B. Schmitt (Baden-Baden, 1984).

we will treat the text of the *Errata*—in which Sepúlveda explicitly compares passages from his own translations and from Alcionio's with the Greek text—to assess both the grounds and the cogency of the critique. Finally, we shall consider the professional and political contexts of the feud, which may further our understanding of a key transitional period in the history both of humanism and of Renaissance Italy.

### 1. Alcionio's Presentation of His Translations

Alcionio's dedicatory letters for the translations of Aristotle, it must be confessed, do not risk overindulgence in the topos of humility. In devoting to his fellow Venetian humanist, Girolamo Negri, a translation of Philoponus's *vita* of Aristotle (included in the volume), Alcionio not only thanks Negri for encouraging him to publish, but also takes the opportunity to blazon the monumental significance of his own achievement:

Girolamo, you have always deemed good our intention that those philosophical works of Aristotle which in previous years I was explicating by stages in rather lucid prose might all be published at one time. And you added that it was especially fitting for the dignity of so great an author, and not greatly unsuited to our worth, that perhaps that Philosopher whom I first (may I not say something arrogantly about myself) had unveiled, brought forth, [and] nourished in Latin words, [is the one] whom I might clothe, suitable and cohering in all his parts, and whom I might display adorned to all the learned.<sup>19</sup>

As Negri knew well (said Alcionio), no Latinist had yet rendered Aristotle aright, a defect common both to “those who defiled Aristotle with expositions published long ago and those who are hired in the schools today for the purpose of conveying his teaching.”<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> Aristotle, *Habes hoc in codice lector*, letter of Alcionio to Negri: “Consilium tu semper nostrum probasti Hieronyme, ut Aristotelis φιλοσοφούμενα quae superioribus annis per parteis illustrioribus literis explicarem, ea omnia uno tempore ederentur addebasque maxime tanti scriptoris dignitati convenire, nec a nostra laude magnopere alienum esse, ut quem Philosophum ego forsitan primus, nequid arroganter de me dicam, latinis finxissem, creassem, aluissem, eundem omnibus suis partibus aptum et cohaerentem vestirem, ornatumque studiosis omnibus exhiberem.” The pages are unnumbered, but directly precede the translation entitled, “Aristotelis vita ex monumentis Ioannis Grammatici Philoponi Alexandrini.”

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*: “nam praedicando, scribendo, contendendo probasti id, quod sine controversia verum est sententiam horum librorum usque ad hunc diem perperam ab Latinis

Renaissance Latinists routinely criticized the translations that they wished their own to supplant. Thus, Leonardo Bruni had presented his Latin rendition (1438) of Aristotle's *Politics* as a corrective to earlier versions, which (so he claimed) had turned the "books written in 'most eloquent' style" into laughably inept Latin.<sup>21</sup> Bruni seems to have been propounding here, as elsewhere, a new conception of "eloquence." In fact, as Paul Botley has noted, Bruni's life-long and increasingly firm conviction that Aristotle had written "eloquently" was not so much a misunderstanding of Cicero's various assertions that Aristotle had been eloquent.<sup>22</sup> Rather, what Bruni admired in Aristotle was his lucid clarity, which led to a kind of persuasiveness not often reflected in the "barbarous" earlier medieval versions. Similarly, when Theodore Gaza of Thessalonike dedicated to Pope Nicholas V in the early 1450s a Latin version of the same books of Aristotle that George of Trebizond had earlier turned into Latin for Nicholas, he implicitly cast George as one of the barbarians whose neologisms and *ad verbum* renderings had distorted the sense of the original.<sup>23</sup>

But Alcionio goes beyond the pale in self-promotion, stating that he has been such an able advocate of Aristotle that were the philosopher alive,

we know with certainty that he would consider no common reward for us, because our labor has finally at long last put an end to bewildering people's minds with feigned understandings and childish absurdities, and to perplexing them with fictive fabrications.<sup>24</sup>

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intellectam fuisse. atque cum Latinos dicebas, volebas, ut omnes intellegerent, te tam eos designare, qui Aristotelem editis olim explanationibus inquinarent, quam qui hodie in Gymnasiis conducuntur ad illius disciplinam tradendam."

<sup>21</sup> "Nam cum viderem hos Aristotelis libros, qui apud Graecos elegantissimo stilo perscripti sunt, vitio mali interpretis ad ridiculam quamdam ineptitudinem esse redactos. . . ." Leonardo Bruni, cited in Brian Copenhaver, "Translation, Terminology and Style in Philosophical Discourse," in *The Cambridge History of Renaissance Philosophy*, ed. Charles B. Schmitt et al. (Cambridge, 1988), 77–110, at 83, n. 17. For an important earlier discussion of translation by Bruni, see his *Humanistisch-philosophische Schriften*, ed. Hans Baron (Leipzig, 1928), 81–96. See also the essay by James Hankins in the present collection.

<sup>22</sup> To wit, that Cicero (at, e.g., *Tusc.*, 1.7) was thinking primarily of Aristotle's lost exoteric works but that Bruni misread these passages, believing them to refer to the esoteric works which formed the basis of the Aristotelian corpus in Bruni's day and in our own. See Paul Botley, *Latin Translation in the Renaissance: The Theory and Practice of Leonardo Bruni, Giannozzo Manetti, and Desiderius Erasmus* (Cambridge, 2004), 41–62.

<sup>23</sup> Copenhaver, "Translation, Terminology and Style," 97.

<sup>24</sup> Aristotle, *Habes hoc in codice lector*, letter of Alcionio to Negri: "Nos quidem in commentario, quo multas ex veteribus Medicis observationes complexi sumus, contra

While claiming to have surpassed all earlier translators of Aristotle, Alcionio positions himself in particular with respect to two figures: Cardinal Bessarion, who had done so much to promote Latin translations of classical Greek authors; and Gaza, whose version of books from the *De animalibus*, first printed in 1476, had quickly become the standard one, being validated above all by their inclusion in the 1504 Aldine edition of his scientific translations.<sup>25</sup> Alcionio gives Bessarion unqualified praise, noting how he had increased the commerce of Greek and Latin scholars, with the result that “after 800 and more years, the Latins have harvested philosophy from Greek writings and teachers.”<sup>26</sup> He also acknowledges the essential contributions of Gaza, who had fled Turkish-besieged Byzantium for Italy, ultimately enjoying in Rome the patronage of Bessarion. Alcionio sides firmly with Gaza in the latter’s vitriolic feud with George of Trebizond, who (says Alcionio) had rendered good Greek books into bad Latin ones.<sup>27</sup> Gaza, by contrast,

by the testimony of all the learned and by the judgment of all Greece and Italy, was adjudged easily the foremost, both in prudence, shrewdness, and directness, and in eloquence, variety, and pleasantness.<sup>28</sup>

With such praise, Alcionio inevitably raises the bar for his own translations: how can he presume to place them on an even higher level?

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hominis accusationem doctissimum Philosophum defendimus, atque eidem ipsi ita adesse studuimus, et quae obiicerentur diluere, ut certo sciamus illum non vulgareis gratias nobis habiturum esse, quod nostra tandem opera aliquando desierit animos hominum confictis sensibus puerilibusque deliramentis confundere, et fabulosissimis commentis implicare.”

<sup>25</sup> Deno J. Geanakoplos, “Theodore Gaza, a Byzantine Scholar of the Palaeologan ‘Renaissance’ in the Italian Renaissance,” *Medievalia et Humanistica*, n.s., 12 (1984), 61–81; but cf. the more critical assessment of Gaza’s method in John Monfasani, “The Pseudo-Aristotelian *Problemata* and Aristotle’s *De animalibus* in the Renaissance,” in *Natural Particulars: Nature and the Disciplines in Renaissance Europe*, ed. Anthony Grafton and Nancy Siraisi (Cambridge, Mass., 1999), 205–47.

<sup>26</sup> Alcionio, in Aristotle, *Habes hoc in codice lector*, t ii r: “Atque ita post octingentos et amplius annos Latini graecis literis, et doctoribus Philosophiam perceperunt.”

<sup>27</sup> Alcionio, in Aristotle, *Habes hoc in codice lector*, t ii v: “Nam Aristotelis quaestiones, et xviii. De animalibus libros latina oratione exposuit. Idque ad frangendam auctoritatem Cretis Trapezuntii, qui prior illos de bonis graecis latinos malos fecerant.” For detailed and more sympathetic comments on Trebizond’s translations, see John Monfasani, *George of Trebizond: A Biography and a Study of his Rhetoric and Logic* (Leiden, 1976), *ad indicem*.

<sup>28</sup> Alcionio, in Aristotle, *Habes hoc in codice lector*, t ii v: “Siquidem tantam ab eiusmodi librorum editione commendationem literarum duxit, ut omnium eruditorum testimonio, totiusque Graeciae, et Italiae iudicio tum prudentia, et acumine, et subtilitate, tum vero eloquentia, varietate, et suavitate omnium doctorum Graeciae, et Italiae facile Princeps iudicatus sit. . . .”

His self-justification takes the form of an argument about the progress of Renaissance linguistic skills, which has left open the way not only to completing what Gaza had started (especially since Gaza had not translated *De incessu* and *De motu*), but actually to improving upon his achievement. Gaza had come to believe the high praises conferred upon him, to such an extent that he imagined that he, like Apelles, could have no equal among those following who could complete adequately what he had left unfinished.<sup>29</sup> Here, however, at least according to Alcionio, Gaza had failed to understand how much the cultural context in which Apelles worked differed from his own:

For [Apelles], [at the time] when there was the greatest abundance of painters, the highest praise of workmanship, and when the most ample rewards were being proposed, was proclaiming these things about himself and the excellence of his skill. But Gaza, just as the Latin language began to revive, was hawking his own hard work and learning amidst a disorderly mob of plebeians, a dearth of the books of certain learned men, and the extraordinary avarice of princes.<sup>30</sup>

Alcionio does credit his predecessor with having done what he could to render Aristotle into eloquent Latin prose, but he says that Gaza had lacked “that fittingness and elegance of speaking which we admire in Tully, Caesar, Sallust, and a certain few writers of their times, and [which we] ought to follow.”<sup>31</sup> Furthermore, Gaza, even in his

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*: “Itaque tam honorificis de se iudiciis, tamque ornatis de sua virtute testimonii adductus crebris sermonibus usurpare solebat, ut de Antonio Galateo illius familiari audiebam, se reliquos decem libros (excipiebat autem tres de anima, quia in latinorum cognitionem illos ante transtulerat Argyropylos) eo consilio noluisse latine interpretari, quo Apellem ferunt Veneris imaginem inchoatam relinquere voluisse, quippe qui sciret aequalem nullum posse aliqua cum laude quicquam in eo genere tentare, nec de posteris ullum futurum qui ad praescripta liniamenta politiore arte quicquam elaborare auderet.” Cf. Pliny, *Natural History*, XXXV.36.92: “Apelles inchoaverat et aliam Venerem Coi, superaturus etiam illam suam priorem. Invidit mors peracta parte, nec qui succederet operi ad praescripta liniamenta inventus est.”

<sup>30</sup> Alcionio, in Aristotle, *Habes hoc in codice lector*, t ii v: “Et, ut quemadmodum sentio loquar, in tanta persuasione literarum cogitare debebat Apellis caussam magnopere esse alienam a sua. Ille enim cum maxima pictorum copia, summa artificii laus esset, amplissimaque ingeniis praemia proponerentur, haec de se, suaeque artis excellentia praedicabat. Sed Gaza circa initia reviviscentis latinae linguae suam industriam et doctrinam venditabat in turba incondita plebeiorum quorundam doctorum in librorum inopia, et incredibili principum avaritia, quarum calamitatum genere semper Italiam praesumiri suspicabatur, ut interdum existimem illum in ea sententia fuisse secum extingui oportere omnem reconditarum literarum laudem et cognitionem.”

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*: “Nos certe quamquam in veritate crimen arrogantiae non extimescimus, tamen plerumque indicavimus hominem in Aristotele vertendo prae se tulisse nullum

work on *De partibus* and *De generatione*, is often found deficient; he did not know the work of Ammonius, the late ancient commentator, and Michael of Ephesus, the twelfth-century Byzantine commentator on those texts. As a result, “at times he does not offer that meaning of the author which those learned writers had presented.”<sup>32</sup> All of this, plus the fact that Gaza had not translated a number of the smaller works dealing with animals, including *De incessu*, opened the way for Alcionio: through imitation both of classical models and of Gaza’s accomplishments (somewhat flawed though they might have been, in Alcionio’s description), he could emulate what had come before, surpassing his predecessors in eloquence of expression, and fashioning renditions of the works of the greatest philosopher of all time in a Latinity befitting his pre-eminence.

## 2. *The Errata: Sepúlveda on Translation*

Given the grandiosity of Alcionio’s self-presentation, in particular when contrasted with his modest standing in the scholarly community, a synopsis of Sepúlveda’s withering attack may serve as a refreshing antidote. In the dedicatory letter to Alberto Pio, Sepúlveda writes that the previous year, after he had already translated the *De incessu* and some other works of Aristotle (which he says he plans to publish soon and to dedicate to Pio), news came to his ears that a certain Pietro Alcionio, too, had translated the *De incessu*, along with other Aristotelian works, and had already had many of these printed. Reflecting his Aristotelian heritage, Sepúlveda writes that the news broke the forward motion (*impetus*) of his pen and retarded his study, not least because of the high praise he had heard of Alcionio’s linguistic

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aliud latinitatis genus tenere, quam id quod a Seneca, Plinio, et Appuleio didicisset, qui auctores omnino doctissimi fuerunt et suo in genere satis eloquentes. sed mihi omnes caruisse videntur ea loquendi proprietate, et elegantia, quam in M. Tullio C. Caesare Sallustio et paucis quibusdam illorum temporum scriptoribus admiramur, et sequi debemus. ad cuius etiam rationem, et splendorem voluissem, ut Gaza totam dictionem, quoad eius fieri poterat, suumque dicendi genus revocasset.”

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*: “Quinetiam saepenumero in libris De partibus et De generatione animalium negligens deprehenditur; nec enim graecos eorum librorum explanatores Ammonium et Michaëlum Ephesium evolvit, ac propterea eum auctoris sensum latine aliquando non proponit, quem doctissimi illi scriptores graece attulerunt.” It is unclear whether either Alcionio or Sepúlveda knew when Michael of Ephesus lived.

skills and expertise in Aristotelian doctrine. Thus, in a passage that can be seen, in retrospect, as dripping with irony, Sepúlveda writes:

For even if I were not at all to shrink from those things which were being praised so greatly in that very man, so much did I not seem worthy of comparison—a novice with a veteran, and (as they used to say) so experienced a soldier—that in fact I thought it would be the mark of an audacious man to hope there would be any place for my ineptnesses, once his works had been published.<sup>33</sup>

He did, however, obtain and study a copy of Alcionio's version, if only so that "once comparison had been made with mine, I might recognize my own *errata* and dullness."<sup>34</sup> Feigning to take seriously Alcionio's presumption of uniqueness, he writes that he "thanked the immortal gods for keeping that man in reserve for our age, so that he might restore both ancient learning and eloquence to mortals."<sup>35</sup> Only near the end of the letter does Sepúlveda abandon the ironic tone:

so that the part in which I attack the carelessnesses of Pietro Alcionio may not be taken to be devoid of all other use, while I have shown that he himself was mistaken, I have appended an explanation of many passages. For even if I have only reported certain items, whose unsoundness can be perceived out of comparison alone, nevertheless for other passages, where the obscurity was greater, I have added on evidence.<sup>36</sup>

Where still further clarification is required, he says, he has appended the testimony and opinion of Michael of Ephesus, whose scholia he had only recently seen.<sup>37</sup> Thus, although Alcionio too thought about the commentary tradition, Sepúlveda wishes to foreground the critical use of commentators on Aristotle as an essential interpretive tool.

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<sup>33</sup> Sepúlveda, *Errata*, AA1r-v: "Nam et si ego ab illarum rerum cognitione, quae in ipso tantopere laudabantur, haud prorsus abhorrerem, tyro tamen cum veterano, et tam exercitato, quam aiebant milite, ita non videbar conferendus, ut illius operibus emissis, fore ullum meis ineptiis locum sperare, audacis esse putarem."

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, AA1v: "Ergo interpretationem eius aggredior, ut facta cum mea comparatione errata, et tarditatem meam recognoscerem."

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*: "Atque adeo diis immortalibus gratias agebam, quod eum virum in nostram aetatem reservasset, qui veterem tum doctrinam, tum eloquentiam mortalibus restitueret."

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*: "Sed ne pars ea qua Petri Alcyonii negligentias insectamur, omni caetera utilitate vacare videatur multorum locorum expositionem adiunximus, dum ipsum errasse ostendimus. Nam et si quaedam, quorum vicium ex sola comparatione deprehendi potest, retulimus tantum, aliis tamen ubi id magis latebat, argumenta subiunximus."

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*: "Nam et si quaedam quorum vicium ex sola comparatione deprehendi potest, retulimus tantum, aliis tamen ubi id magis latebat, argumenta subiunximus. Et quorundam praeterea quae sui obscuritate ac difficultate operi magna ex parte obfundebant tenebras implicitumque reddebant, Michaelis Ephesii declarationem



Sepúlveda, as we shall see, had definite ideas about the enterprise of translation; the *Errata* is not only an attack designed to diminish the reputation of a rival (although admittedly that is one of the ends at which it aims), it is also the outcome of ideas and ideologies which translators had developed and, through repeated practice, refined over time, particularly in the fifteenth century.<sup>38</sup> Thus, in examining the *Errata*, we must bear in mind not only his wish to discredit Alcionio's publication, but also the quite distinct philological *acuitas* that he brings to his critique. Above all, he faults Alcionio for his arrogance in presuming to have superseded not only Theodore Gaza—widely acknowledged as the most felicitous translator of Aristotle ever—but also for taking too lightly the entire tradition of Aristotelian interpretation.<sup>39</sup> Whereas Alcionio had given lip-service to his use of Michael of Ephesus, Sepúlveda cites him at length and indeed will also examine Michael of Ephesus critically, sometimes even showing that Alcionio had erred by following Michael unreflectively. Using Michael of Ephesus also served a more practical end: it was a surefire way to arouse the interest of Alberto Pio, who had promoted the publication of various commentators on Aristotle, and who had even lent Pietro Pomponazzi an unpublished version of Michael's comments on *De motu animalium* and *De incessu animalium*, which would appear in an Aldine edition in 1527.<sup>40</sup>

Sepúlveda's concerns come into sharper relief in the introductory remarks of the treatise itself, in which he takes Alcionio to task for some of the more grandiose and dubious assertions in the latter's dedicatory letter to Ottaviano Fregoso. Alcionio has erred gravely, he argues, in indiscriminately blurring generic boundaries, assuming that "to the extent that one is more eloquent, he is the more to be proposed for imitation in every kind of writing."<sup>41</sup> Sepúlveda begs to differ:

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inter haec inserui, quibus expositionibus praemissis et iis quas ipso in opere suis locis ascripsi nihil erit (ut spero) quin parvo negotio percipiatur."

<sup>38</sup> See Botley, *Latin Translation*; the comments in Christopher S. Celenza, "'Parallel lives': Plutarch's *Lives*, Lapo da Castiglionchio the Younger (1405–1438) and the Art of Italian Renaissance Translation," *Illinois Classical Studies*, 22 (1997), 121–55; and Stefano U. Baldassarri, *Umanesimo e traduzione da Petrarca a Manetti* (Cassino, 2003).

<sup>39</sup> Sepúlveda, *Errata*, AA3r–v.

<sup>40</sup> Schmitt, "Alberto Pio," 59; Bruno Nardi, *Studi su Pietro Pomponazzi* (Florence, 1965); Michael Hayduck, ed., *Michaelis Ephesii in libros De partibus animalium, De animalium motione, De animalium incessu*, in *Commentaria in Aristotelem Graeca*, XXII, pt. 2 (Berlin, 1904), iv. [henceforth abbreviated "Michael of Ephesus, ed. Hayduck"]

<sup>41</sup> Sepúlveda, *Errata*, AA4r: "Nec enim quo quisque eloquentior est, eo magis in omni scribendi genere est proponendus ad imitandum."

Nothing can be thought of that is more foolish than this, since the style of oratory differs so greatly from that of history, that the same Fabius [Quintilian] teaches that the orator must avoid many of what pass for virtues in history, and Cicero repeatedly said that neither Thucydides nor Xenophon was of any use to the orator. . . . And if these things are rightly taught, then let Alcionio understand [just] how well the historical or oratorical style is fitted for the tempered style of speaking, which it is certain that the philosophers used. For its own law (as the same [Quintilian] says) is set forth for each subject matter; for each, there is its own standard of decorum.<sup>42</sup>

The underlying assumption is that there are various registers of discourse. Each style of work should be translated according to its proper register, and in each, the most outstanding author is to be placed before the rest.<sup>43</sup> Here, he echoes a standard trope of medieval and Renaissance philosophy: the theory of the *primum in aliquo genere*—the “first in each genus.”<sup>44</sup> Philosophically, the concept is found as far back as Plato, who in his *Lysis* (219c5–d5) speaks of a *proton philon*, but it found full expression in the Middle Ages, when it came to be seen as a central tenet of ontology: each genus of being has its most complete representative, on which the individual species within that genus depend. Here, the result, for Sepúlveda, is that in writing history, Sallust or Livy should be placed before Cicero; in teaching, Quintilian is preferred to all; and in natural history, Pliny is by far better than all the rest of the Latins. Thus Sepúlveda faults Alcionio not only for ignorance of Aristotle and the Aristotelian tradition, but also for his lack of literary sensitivity and precision. In truth, by this point in the Renaissance, the most advanced philology and the most advanced philosophy were converging. As Sepúlveda’s examination reveals, Alcionio’s real problem was not so much trying to force Aristotle into Ciceronian Latin, but doing it thoughtlessly.

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<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*: “. . . quo quid potest ineptius excogitari, cum stilus oratorius ab historico charactere tam longe distet, ut plerasque historiae virtutes oratori vitandas esse Fabius idem praecipiat. Et Cicero nec Thucydidem nec Xenophontem utiles esse oratori dictaverit. . . . quae si recte praecipiantur, viderit Alcyonius, quam bene historicus et oratorius stilus cum temperato dicendi genere conveniat, quo philosophos usos fuisse constat. Sua etenim cuique (ut idem ait) proposita Lex, suus cuique decor est.” Sepúlveda here draws upon Quintilian, *Institutiones Oratoriae*, X.1–31. For Cicero, see e.g. his *Brutus*, 287–88, and *Orator*, 30–32.

<sup>43</sup> Sepúlveda, *Errata*, AA5v: “Superest ergo ut in suo genere praestantissimum quemque proponi nobis praecipere intelligamus.”

<sup>44</sup> Cf. Paul Oskar Kristeller, *Il pensiero filosofico di Marsilio Ficino*, rev. ed. (Florence, 1988), 153–79 for the concept in Ficino; see 159–60 for medieval antecedents.

In the *exempla* that follow, Sepúlveda painstakingly sets out how, in his view, Alcionio has erred, producing Latin prose that, howsoever ornate it might be, has badly misconstrued the sense of the Greek. As ever, Sepúlveda proceeds systematically, first setting out the Greek passage in question and then reporting Alcionio's translation. Next, he offers his objection and a retranslation, explaining why his version is more consonant with Aristotle's meaning, and he supplements his opinion with information drawn from Michael of Ephesus. Thus, for example, in a passage near the beginning of the *De incessu animalium*, Aristotle had written (704a7–9):

ἔτι δὲ περὶ τῶν διαφορῶν τῶν τε πρὸς ἄλληλα τοῖς τοῦ αὐτοῦ καὶ ἐνὸς ζώου μορίοις, καὶ πρὸς τὰ τῶν ἄλλων τῶν τῷ γένει διαφορῶν ἐπισκέπτειν [for διαφορῶν ἐπισκέπτειν, the modern text reads διαφορῶν. πρῶτον δὲ λάβωμεν περὶ ὅσων ἐπισκέπτειν].<sup>45</sup>

With respect to this passage, Sepúlveda draws the following contrast, setting out Alcionio's version, his own, and then Michael of Ephesus's interpretation:

Quae verba sic interpretatur ALCYONIUS: "De differentiis item habebitur oratio, quae explicentur inter partes unius eiusdemque animalis, et inter partes caeterorum animalium, quae specie inter se differant."<sup>46</sup> GENESIUS: Haec interpretatio nec sensum exprimit Aristotelis, et nimis esse implicitam nostra, nisi fallor, declarabit. Nos enim si<c> interpretati sumus: "Tractand<a>e sunt praeterea differentiae quibus eiusdem uniusque animalis partes tum inter se, tum a partibus aliorum animalium genere diversorum discrepant." Discrepant enim partes eiusdem animalis inter se ut crura in equo, cuius priorum crurum flexus non eodem agitur, atque posteriorum. Inter pa<r>tes quoque differentium specie discrimen est, quia quod est in homine brachia, hoc in ave alae, in quadrupedibus crura priora.<sup>47</sup>

<sup>45</sup> "We must consider further the differences among themselves in the parts of one and the same animal and how they differ in respect of animals who are diverse in species."

<sup>46</sup> *Errata*, AA5v: "These words Alcionio translates thus: 'Discourse shall likewise be had concerning the differences which are displayed among the parts of one and the same animal, and among the parts of other animals which differ among themselves in species.'" We attempt here to reproduce in English some sense of the awkwardness of Alcionio's hyper-eloquent Latinity.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*: "GINES: This translation does not even explain Aristotle's sense, and ours, if I am not mistaken, will make clearer what is implied. For we have translated in this fashion: 'Moreover, what must be treated are those differences by which the parts of one and the same animal differ among themselves, on the one hand, and, on the other, how they differ from the parts of other animals who are diverse in species.' For the parts of the same animal differ among themselves, like the legs on a horse, the curve of whose front legs is not made in the same manner as that of the hind legs."

Here, Alcionio's flaw is not so much grammatical incorrectness as carelessness regarding the Aristotelian context. To elucidate what Aristotle means, Sepúlveda draws liberally—and here literally—on Michael of Ephesus' commentary to suggest that there are different ways to understand differentiation of function in the parts of animals. The front and hind legs of a horse are different and have different functions; and similarly placed parts are different in different types of animals. Again, Alcionio's error is heedlessness. He is translating a biological work, a part of natural philosophy, and yet he is unable to realize that one must, even as a translator, think of the real referent in nature to which Aristotle's text refers.<sup>48</sup>

In Sepúlveda's view, Alcionio's translations are incomprehensible because Alcionio has not understood Aristotle: a fact that comes into relief in another of Sepúlveda's criticisms, concerning a slightly later passage in the *De incessu* in which Aristotle is making a transition into the body of the work. Here Aristotle believes that he has established in the *Historia animalium* the facts regarding the different sorts of motion in animals. Now he wishes to move on to the causes of these differences (704b). He suggests that:

We must begin our inquiry by assuming the principles which we are frequently accustomed to employ in natural investigation, namely, by accepting as true what occurs in accordance with these principles in all the works of nature. (704b)

The passage in question follows this immediately. The Greek, in Sepúlveda's text (AA6r), reads as follows:

Τούτων δὲ ἔν [modern ed.: δ'έν] μὲν ἔστιν ὅτι ἡ φύσις οὐθὲν ποιεῖ μάτην. ἀλλ' ἀεὶ ἐκ τῶν ἐνδεχομένων τῆ οὐσίᾳ περὶ ἕκαστον γένος ζώου τὸ ἄριστον· διόπερ εἰ βέλτιον ᾧδί, οὕτως καὶ ἔχει κατὰ φύσιν.<sup>49</sup>

Again, Sepúlveda first cites Alcionio's translation:

Illorum autem unum est naturam nihil frustra moliri. Immo semper id machinari et efficere, quod optimum sit de his, quae pertinere possunt

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Among parts, too, there is a distinction in the kind of differences, since what in a man are arms, are wings in a bird, and front legs in quadrupeds." "For the parts . . . quadrupeds" is essentially a translation of Michael of Ephesus (*idem*, ed. Hayduck, 135, lines 24–29).

<sup>48</sup> See note 38 above. Sepúlveda had said at the outset, in his prefatory letter to Alberto Pio, that he would use Michael, occasionally even by inserting his words directly, so there is no need for him to point out the direct citation.

<sup>49</sup> Tr. Forster, modified: "One of these is that nature never creates anything without a purpose, but always what is best in view of the possibilities allowed by the

ad statum cuiusque generis animalium. Et res quidem ita se habent per naturam. ob potioem rationem, quam ipsa natura eximiam fecerit.<sup>50</sup>

Of this, Sepúlveda writes: “It is no wonder that we cannot grasp these words, since the translator himself hasn’t understood [them].”<sup>51</sup> His own rendition is as follows:

Ex quorum numero unum est, naturam nil facere frustra, quin immo in omni genere animalium semper optimum eorum, quae substantiae sunt possibilia, quare ut melius se res habet, sic se habet per naturam.<sup>52</sup>

Sepúlveda’s translation sticks much more closely to the word order and literal meaning of Aristotle’s phraseology, is more economical in its rendering, and importantly is careful to translate the Greek οὐσία with *substantia*, its long-accepted philosophical equivalent.

The next passage, analyzing the sentence immediately following in Aristotle’s text, is equally illustrative of Sepúlveda’s problems with Alcionio. This is so if only because of the brevity of Sepúlveda’s intervention and because of what Sepúlveda believes he can leave unsaid. He simply juxtaposes Alcionio’s version with his own. The Greek passage is as follows:

ἔτι τὰς διαστάσεις τοῦ μεγέθους, πόσαι καὶ ποῖα ποίοις ὑπάρχουσι, δεῖ λαβεῖν.<sup>53</sup>

Sepúlveda then quotes Alcionio’s version:

AL. Iam vero quantae et quales magnitudinis dimensiones, et quibus attribuantur, proponere convenit.<sup>54</sup>

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essence of each kind of animal; therefore, if it is better to do a thing in a particular manner, it is also in accordance with nature.”

<sup>50</sup> *Errata*, AA6r: “Of these things, moreover, there is one, that nature labors at nothing in vain. Yea, always does it engineer and manufacture what be best of those things which can relate to the constitution of each genus of animals. And, to be sure, things are according to nature, on account of the more powerful reason which nature herself made the best.”

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*: “Quae verba minime mirum est a nobis non percipi, cum ne ipse quidem interpres intellexerit. . . .”

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*: “One from the number of these is that nature does nothing in vain, indeed, in every genus of animals it always does the best of those things that are possible for its substance, so that, as something is in its best state, so is it according to nature.”

<sup>53</sup> 704b18–20. “δὲ” is lacking in the modern edition. Tr. Forster, modified: “Further, one must grasp the dimensions of magnitude in the size and quality in which they are present in various objects.”

<sup>54</sup> *Errata*, AA6r: “Alcionio. But now it is fitting to discuss how many and of what sort are the dimensions of magnitude, and to which things they may be attributed.”

And then he offers his own:

G. Nos sic: Ad haec accipere oportet, quot, et quae quibus insunt magnitudinis differentiae.<sup>55</sup>

Comparing the two, we can see that, with respect to word order, Sepúlveda is in one sense more literal, as he attempts to wring a more coherent and synthetic meaning out of the passage. His initial *ad haec* is puzzling; one suspects that *adhuc*—the Latin equivalent of the Greek ἔτι—is what Sepúlveda had in mind, and that in the slapdash printing process, the word came through incorrectly. For his part, Alcionio, seeing the Greek πόσαι καὶ ποῖαι, seems to want to reflect, with his *quantae et quales*, the fact that these words in Greek derive from the Aristotelian categories of “how many” (πόσον) and “of what sort” (ποῖον), that is, “quantity” and “quality.”

Yet, of the two, Sepúlveda’s version, again, is more useful for those—philosophers or philologists—seeking precision: seeking, that is, the precise variety of eloquence which Bruni had intuited in Aristotle. Alcionio’s *proponere convenit*, for the Greek δεῖ λαβεῖν, is loose; whereas Sepúlveda’s *accipere oportet* represents more closely the sense of necessity present in the Greek δεῖ. And Sepúlveda’s rendering of πόσαι καὶ ποῖαι—as *quot, et quae*—reflects his realization that the words in Greek are not used here in their absolute categorical sense in modifying διαστάσεις. Rather, this short sentence represents a continuance of the general theory which Aristotle had, in the immediately preceding passage, begun to propound. Since nature does nothing in vain, when we are looking at the way animals move, we must make sure, first, to see how things move in general. The “differences in magnitude” are further broken down, in the immediately following passage, into three sets of two dimensions: superior and inferior; front and back; and right and left.

Sepúlveda’s simple juxtaposition of Alcionio’s version with his own conveys the impression that he is thinking of the overall flow of thought in the Aristotelian text, whereas Alcionio is more concerned with seeming erudite; as if Alcionio were advertising his knowledge of Aristotle’s ten categories rather than offering a useful, accurate version of a text that by this time everyone knew did not have literary pretensions but was rather the basis for a professionalized culture: that of Aristotelian,

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<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*: “Gines. We translate thus: To these one must grasp how many and which differences of magnitude are present in which things.”

Scholastic philosophers. Contextual accuracy and the eloquence of precision were the aims in translation, not Latinate virtuosity; and in this context, Aristotle is making logical points, about how things can be said to move, as much as he is making natural-philosophical points.

Soon thereafter, Sepúlveda explodes, as he sees Alcionio appearing to make nonsense out of a relatively clear point. Aristotle is in the midst of a discussion concerning the dimensions (διαστάσεις) by which animals are bounded, which, again, are six: “superior and inferior, front and back, and also right and left.” (705a26–30) He has stated that all living things (ζῶντα) have a superior and an inferior part, and that this distinction is even found in plants. It is a distinction that has to do with a body part’s relative distance from the point at which it gains nourishment: “the part from which is derived the distribution of nutriment and the growth in any particular thing is the superior; the part to which the growth extends and in which it finally ends is the inferior.” Aristotle then moves to other dimensions. The Aristotelian passage, as cited by Sepúlveda, is as follows:

“Ὅσα δὲ μὴ μόνον ζῆ ἀλλὰ καὶ ζῶα ἐστὶ, τοῖς τοιοῦτοις ὑπάρχει τό τε ἔμπροσθεν καὶ τὸ ὀπίσθεν. αἴσθησιν γὰρ ἔχει [ταῦτα πάντα]. . . .<sup>56</sup>

Sepúlveda gives Alcionio’s version:

Itaque ante et pone non modo adscribitur iis, quae vivunt, verum etiam iis quae animalia sunt. Quando haec omnia sensu vigere intelliguntur. . . .<sup>57</sup>

Sepúlveda responds with growing exasperation:

Here I invoke the honor of all peripatetics, Greek and Latin, so that they might aid their prince against this savage translator, who unwilling and struggling is compelled by that passage to confess things which no one—and I mean not just a philosopher but even a sane man—would affirm. As long as he is attributing a front and back to plants, he [consequently] generously endows them with sense; and he doesn’t even allow Aristotle to agree with himself. Aristotle, in the second book of *De caelo et mundo*, had taught things thoroughly contrary to these [opinions]. Still, for a wound of this sort, the more savagely it is inflicted, the more easily resisted. And so the damage received will be

<sup>56</sup> [Tr. Forster] “Things which not only live but are also animals have both a front and a back. For all animals have sense perception. . . .”

<sup>57</sup> *Errata*, AA6v: “Therefore ‘front’ and ‘back’ not only is attributed to those things which live, but also to those which are animals. Seeing that all these are understood to thrive by means of sense. . . .”

remedied sufficiently if we interpret Aristotle's words—which are clear as day—like this: “But things that not only live but are also animals possess both a front and a back on account of sense, which is allotted to all of them.”<sup>58</sup>

The point here is clear: in changing Aristotle's word order, Alcionio has violated the sense of the passage. This violation is confirmed by a close look at Aristotle's text. Immediately after the passage in question, Aristotle fills out what he was saying by suggesting that all animals have sense perception, and it is on this account that they can be said to have a front and a back—for it is in the “front” of an animal, in his view, that the organs of sense perception reside.<sup>59</sup> Aristotle's word order was very careful here, and the key is in the placement of the dative τοῖς τοιοῦτοις. Aristotle writes, literally (705b8–11):

Not only those things that live [ἄσα δὲ μὴ μόνον ζῆ, i.e., the largest set of things which have life, which include plants], but also those that are animals [ἀλλὰ καὶ ζῶα ἐστὶ, i.e., a smaller set that does not include plants], in those sorts of things [τοῖς τοιοῦτοις] is contained [ὑπάρχει] both front and back [τό τε ἔμπροσθεν καὶ τὸ ὀπίσθεν].

Were the sentence standing alone, Alcionio's translation might make sense; but viewed in the context of *De incessu*, where Aristotle immediately goes on to make his point about the location of sensation in animals, it is confusing, if not outright inaccurate. For good measure, Sepúlveda also refers to a passage in Aristotle's *De caelo* (II.2.284b16–18), where Aristotle, discussing what types of dimensions the heavens can be said to have and cross-referencing his biological works, makes sure to state that when it comes to dimensions, “plants appear to have only above and below [ὑπάρχοντα φαίνεται . . . τοῖς δὲ φυτοῖς τὸ ἄνω καὶ τὸ κάτω μόνον].” Finally, it is worth noting that Michael of Ephesus had commented extensively on this passage, making clear the distinctions Sepúlveda stresses.<sup>60</sup>

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*: “Hic ego omnium peripateticorum graecorum latinorumque fidem imploro, ut contra violentum interpretem suo principi opem ferant, qui invitus et reluctans ea ab illo cogitur confiteri quae nemo—non dico philosophus sed sanus—affirmaret; dum plantis tribuit ante et retro, plantis sensum largitur, nec ei [i.e., Aristoteli] licet sibi saltem consentire, qui, secundo De caelo et mundo [cf. *De caelo*, 2.2.284b13–18] his penitus contraria docuerat, quanquam huius generis iniuriae, quanto ea violentius infertur, tanto facilius obsistitur; acceptum igitur damnum satis resartietur, si Aristotelis luce clariora verba sic interpretabimur: ‘Quae vero non modo vivunt, sed etiam sunt animantes, his prius et posterius insunt ob sensum, qui his omnibus tributus est.’”

<sup>59</sup> 705b10–13.

<sup>60</sup> Michael of Ephesus, ed. Hayduck, 141–44.



Although only a small sampling taken from the beginning of the *Errata*, these examples reveal much about the assumptions underlying Sepúlveda's critique. Repeatedly, he blames Alcionio for a lack of clarity and accuracy in language. He often attaches, implicitly or explicitly, another, more subtle critique: to translate Aristotle well, one must not only control the language, one must also faithfully engage with both Aristotelian philosophy and the Aristotelian tradition. In this respect Sepúlveda's critiques can be seen as a significant contribution to the Renaissance theory of translation. His use of Michael of Ephesus is noteworthy, in that he does not suggest that the commentator is universally to be followed. The translator's role, in his view, is that of an interpreter as well as a pure converter. The style and substance of a translation must be informed by an independent-minded, scholarly interpretation of each point. Interestingly, one of the old saws that much earlier humanists had invoked against scholastic philosophers—that they slavishly followed authority—winds up being deployed here against a humanist, as Sepúlveda critiques Alcionio for using Michael of Ephesus uncritically. One suspects that, had Poliziano lived this long, he might have got on well with Sepúlveda, at least at this relatively early stage in Sepúlveda's career. For by this point, in this world, the humanist-Scholastic debate had changed radically.<sup>61</sup>

Such, at least, is the substantive issue over which Alcionio and Sepúlveda squared off, ostensibly a matter entirely of scholarly methods and competences. But matters both structural and personal were at stake here; nor was the scholarly debate worked out in a political vacuum. Let us turn first of all to the institutional and interpersonal contexts that informed and gave added resonance to this debate. Then, we shall offer some conjectures on how the behaviors and assertions of our two scholars might be read within the broader context of Italian court culture in a crucial decade of the political and military transformation usually referred to as the *Crisi d'Italia*.

### 3. *Rivalries Within the Respublica Litterarum*

From the above details, it should be clear that Sepúlveda had compelling scholarly reasons to fault his rival's performance as a translator. Alcionio's less-than-critical use of forerunners and his pomposity

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<sup>61</sup> Erika Rummel, *The Humanist-Scholastic Debate in the Renaissance and Reformation* (Cambridge, Mass., 1995); and Jill Kraye, "Philologists and Philosophers," in *eadem*, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to Renaissance Humanism* (Cambridge, 1996), 142–60.

in presentation went hand in hand with his not paying adequate attention to the tradition of Aristotelian scholarship, and as a result the quality of his translations had suffered. Yet Alcionio's approach and manner—and Sepúlveda's bristling in response to it—may also suggest a larger issue endemic to Renaissance history, or at least recurrent within it: that is, the difference in mentality and rhetoric between institutionally enfranchised and extra-institutional disenfranchised intellectuals, a difference reflected not only in the specifics of their work, but in the scope of their concerns and the manner in which they expressed them.

Sepúlveda could be taken to represent the perspective of a cultured, traditional, institutional scholar who has already devoted many years to learning how to understand Aristotle. Not only has he studied with one of the leading Aristotelian scholars of his day, Pietro Pomponazzi, he even helped the master when Pomponazzi, Greekless, wanted recourse to the as-yet-untranslated Greek commentators on the *De partibus animalium*.<sup>62</sup> As anyone might be, Sepúlveda is dismayed by losing priority on a relatively high-profile project. The critiques he advances are penetrating, persuasive, and suggestive of the razor-sharp critical mind whose fearsome acuity would be mobilized two decades later for other ends.<sup>63</sup> It is highly ironic, in fact, that at this early phase in his career, Sepúlveda's rhetoric is that of the insider to Aristotelian studies, for later on the tables would turn. In the mid-1540s, he wrote his *Democrates secundus sive de justis causis belli apud Indos* in order to provide a theoretical justification of the subjugation of the American Indians. But when the work was submitted for a license to be printed, the request was denied by the doctors of the Universities of Alcalá and Salamanca, because Sepúlveda had

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<sup>62</sup> As Pomponazzi testified in his first lecture on the *De partibus animalium*, 10 November 1521 (Bibl. Ambrosiana, Milan, MS D.417 inf., fol. 3r, cit. Nardi, *Studi*, 200): "Quia multi sunt viri greci [by which Pomponazzi means those skilled in Greek] a quibus quotidie adisco, D. Lazarus noster, Iohannes Hispanus [i.e., Sepúlveda], Petrus Iacobus Neapolitanus et alii, ego rogo eos ut me corrigant ubi male dixerō, ut vobiscum adiscam; nam magis amo scientiam quam me."

<sup>63</sup> Cf. Lewis Hanke, *Aristotle and the American Indians: A Study in Race Prejudice in the Modern World* (Chicago, 1959); *idem*, *All Mankind is One: A Study of the Disputation Between Bartolomé de Las Casas and Juan Ginés de Sepúlveda in 1550 on the Intellectual and Religious Capacity of the American Indians* (DeKalb, Ill., 1974); Anthony Pagden, *The Fall of Natural Man: The American Indian and the Origins of Comparative Ethnology* (Cambridge, 1982); *idem*, *Spanish Imperialism and the Political Imagination: Studies in European and Spanish-American Social and Political Theory, 1513–1830* (New Haven, 1990), 24–33; *idem*, *Lords of All the World: Ideologies of Empire in Spain, Britain and France, c. 1500–c. 1800* (New Haven, 1995), 99–102.

both flouted the customary conventions of scholastic discourse, and gone against the opinion of an establishment intellectual, Francisco de Vitoria, who held the main chair in theology at Salamanca from 1529 until 1546, the year of his death.<sup>64</sup> Still and all, in the early 1520s, he was far better ensconced than Alcionio in a traditional field with a long pedigree.

Pedigree was not Alcionio's strong suit. Although we may guess that he was born in the 1490s somewhere near Venice, his own contemporaries appear to have had difficulty ascertaining his origins. Indeed, Alcionio himself evidently did little to uncloud the issue: thus Giovio said of him that "although he suppressed the names of his two cities, [he] confessed himself a hybrid. . . ."<sup>65</sup> Similarly, Negri noted that Alcionio claimed a different provenance on different occasions, perhaps hoping to incite the most famous cities of Italy to quarrel over which one could take credit for him.<sup>66</sup> An arriviste frequently ridiculed in terms drawn from classical Rome (e.g., Negri said of him that in his Pentecost oration, he displayed *rusticitas* and spoke with a *vox illiberalis*, a voice unworthy of a free man), Alcionio perhaps embodied in extreme form some features that tended to characterize earlier generations of disenfranchised Renaissance intellectuals: institutionally rootless itinerancy and a constant, often frustrated search for patronage.<sup>67</sup> Let us trace briefly the outlines of the remainder of his career, with particular reference to these issues and to the social world of *litterati* in which he was perforce engaged, agonistically more often than not.

Already in March 1522, the month in which Sepúlveda's *Errata* appeared and not long after Alcionio's move to Florence, Alcionio was under attack for reasons that may or may not have been related to that incident. Thus Negri noted in a letter to Michiel that certain Florentines were highly critical of Alcionio, and even wrote against him: a situation which Alcionio's key patron, Cardinal Giulio

<sup>64</sup> Pagden, *Fall of Natural Man*, 60, 109–118.

<sup>65</sup> Paolo Giovio, *An Italian Portrait Gallery*, tr. Florence Alden Gragg (Boston, 1935), 152. On Alcionio's birth and death dates, see the analysis in Gouwens, *Remembering the Renaissance*, 34, n. 8, and 57, n. 120.

<sup>66</sup> BAV MS Vat. Lat. 5892, fol. 228v: "solet is interdum varie de patria definire, fortasse ea spe, ut clarissimae quaeque Italiae urbes de eo inter se aliquando dimicent." The letter, addressed to a certain "Marcus" (presumably Marcantonio Michiel), is dated 22 June 1525.

<sup>67</sup> On the itinerant character of early Renaissance humanism, see Jerrold I. Seigel, *Rhetoric and Philosophy in Italian Humanism* (Princeton, 1968). See also the assessment of Georg Voigt's views in the essay by Paul Grendler, chap. 12 above.

de' Medici, merely found amusing.<sup>68</sup> That same year, the Cardinal awarded a large stipend to none other than Sepúlveda (then in Rome), for the translation of Alexander of Aphrodisias's commentary on Aristotle's *Metaphysics*.<sup>69</sup> Anxious about competition from his nemesis, whose translations had been well-received in the scholarly community, Alcionio proceeded to write letters "full of venom" to Medici favorites, asking that they not speak well of Sepúlveda to Cardinal Giulio.<sup>70</sup> The recipients of these letters in turn goaded Alcionio by protesting that they would seem either spiteful or ignorant were they to criticize Sepúlveda, since the cardinal esteemed him so highly. Cardinal Giulio, meanwhile, found the two humanists' discomfiture entertaining, and continued to employ both.<sup>71</sup>

When Giulio de' Medici was elevated as Pope Clement VII that November, Negri speculated that Alcionio would immediately head to the center of the action, even though it would mean proximity to Sepúlveda, whom he said Alcionio dreaded "as the sparrow fears the hawk."<sup>72</sup> In fact, as soon as Alcionio heard of Clement's election, he asked permission to leave at once his obligations to the Florentine *Studio*; when his release was delayed, Alcionio left town in secret, arriving in Rome on 5 December 1523.<sup>73</sup>

<sup>68</sup> *LP*, fol. 95r (Negri to Michiel, 17 March 1523): "In Fiorenza l'hanno, come si dice, annasato, et ho inteso, che'l Cardinal de' Medici si piglia spasso di certi Fiorentini, che lo travagliano, etiam in literis; tra gli altri un Filippo Strozzi assai ingegnoso. Credo non starà saldo, perche sapete il naso de' Fiorentini, et la importunità loro." But Cardinal Giulio did at least afford some protection and support. Thus Negri speculates (fol. 95v): "... non essendovi il Cardinale, quei fiorentini lo tratteriano troppo male."

<sup>69</sup> *LP*, fol. 99v (Negri to Michiel, 1 Sept. 1523): "Il detto Spagnuolo è qui [Rome], et ha havuto dal Cardinal de' Medici ducati dugento, per tradurre Alessandro sopra la Metafisica. . . ."

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*: "[Alcionio] si dispera, che costui [Sepúlveda] habbia credito, et scrive di qui a i favoriti de Medici lettere piene di veneno; pregandoli, che non lo vogliano favorire appresso il Cardinale."

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*: "Di che essi prendono grande spasso, et gli rispondono, che non fanno che si fare, perche la dottrina di costui lo ha tanto posto innanzi al Cardinale, che essi pareriano o maligni, o ignoranti a volerlo disfavorire. Della qual cosa l'Alcionio più s'avampa, et il Cardinale, che sà la cosa, ne piglia gran solazzo."

<sup>72</sup> *LP*, fol. 101r (Negri to Michiel, 18 Nov. 1523): "Credo che l'Alcionio correrà al romore, benche questo Spagnuolo qui lo spaventa, come lo sparvier la quaglia."

<sup>73</sup> *LP*, fol. 102r (Negri to Michiel, 8 Dec. 1523): "Messer Pietro Alcionio, subito che intese la creatione del Pontefice, dimandò licentia, et publice et privatim, di venirsene in Roma. La Signoria di Fiorenza non gliela volle dare, dicendo, che non haveva ancora proveduto di un'altro in luogo suo. Egli impatiens morae appostò due feste, che non si leggeva, et, nemine salutato, se ne partì. Et così già tre giorni arrivò qui con infinita speranza di cose grandi."

From the outset of Clement's papacy, however, Alcionio, like other humanists who sought favor in the papal Curia, was confronted by the financial constraints of a treasury left bankrupt by the profligate Leo X, little enriched in the short pontificate of Adrian VI, and under Clement VII pushed ultimately to the breaking point by the high costs of fielding armies to fend off foreign aggressors.<sup>74</sup> Opportunities were sufficiently competitive that Negri speculated that Alcionio might soon be forced by circumstances to return to Florence, if the Signoria would deign to take him back.<sup>75</sup> A further constraint upon Alcionio's chances for success in Rome was that criticisms of his scholarship had preceded him there—as had, of course, Sepúlveda. Already in March of 1523, Negri had written from Rome that:

the dialogue [i.e., the *De exilio*] of Alcionio is greatly torn apart by these academicians, and there are some who write against him, who have constrained me not to make known their names.<sup>76</sup>

One of these figures is probably Giovio, who had been upset because he had been told (incorrectly, as it happened) that Alcionio was writing history, an undertaking to which he felt he had exclusive rights.<sup>77</sup> According to Negri, Giovio had in fact been misled solely so that others could enjoy the sport of setting him upon Alcionio.<sup>78</sup>

Alcionio was not a total outcast in Rome: Giovio includes him in a list of participants in the sodality of Angelo Colocci, and a 1524 letter of Erasmus links him in passing with two other leading Roman

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<sup>74</sup> Melissa Meriam Bullard, *Filippo Strozzi and the Medici: Favor and Finance in Sixteenth-Century Florence and Rome* (Cambridge, 1980), 119–72, esp. 124, 128–29, and 145, provides a graphic portrait of the monetary problems of Clement VII.

<sup>75</sup> *LP*, fol. 102r (Negri to Michiel, 8 Dec. 1523): “Ma Dio voglia, che non habbia lasciato il proprio per l'appellativo perche tanti sono gli altri, che sono innanzi a lui, et che hanno gran difficultà d'esser riconosciuti al presente, che dubito duri gran fatica a ricuperar quanto ha lasciato a Fiorenza, et che forse sia necessitato a ritornarvi, se però havrà ricetta per la sua partita così licentiosa, hoc est senza licenza.”

<sup>76</sup> *LP*, fol. 93r (Negri to Michiel, 17 March 1523): “Il Dialogo dell'Alcionio è molto lacerato da questi Academici, et sono alcuni, che gli scrivono contra, i quali m'hanno stretto congiuramento a non pubblicare i nomi loro.”

<sup>77</sup> *LP*, fol. 99v (Negri to Michiel, 1 Sept. 1523): “Harei salutato il Giovio. . . E in rotta con l'Alcionio, perche gli è stato detto, che l'Alcionio scrive historia, la quale impresa egli non vuol cedere ad alcuno.”

<sup>78</sup> *LP*, fol. 100r (Negri to Michiel, 1 Sept. 1523): “Altra historia non scrive l'Alcionio, che questa oratione, benche al Giovio altramente sia stato dato ad intendere, per attaccargli insieme.”

humanists, Johann Goritz and Jacopo Sadoletto.<sup>79</sup> But it is perhaps telling of his status that, in that same year, Alcionio wrote to Francesco del Nero, then the vice-depositor for the Florentine Signoria, trying to obtain the remainder of the sum owed him for his service there in 1522–23.<sup>80</sup> Invoking the authority of Clement VII on his behalf, he nonetheless felt compelled to remind Del Nero of his impoverishment and to emphasize that he wrote on his own account out of necessity.<sup>81</sup> In 1525, Alcionio was honored with the prestigious invitation to present an oration *coram papa* on Pentecost Sunday.<sup>82</sup> If there is even a grain of truth in Negri's account of the episode, however, it was a disaster, as Alcionio delivered a hyper-Ciceronian oration in an awkward and boorish manner. Worse still, he was unaware of his foolishness, and interpreted the hearers' laughter as confirmation of the wit and charm of his presentation.<sup>83</sup> While Clement VII once again appeared as his amused protector, Alcionio's fellow *litterati*—many, perhaps, envying him his selection to deliver the oration—delighted in its spectacular failure.<sup>84</sup> In any case, the honor of delivering a sermon *coram papa* could not substitute for steady employment in a well-remunerated post.

Throughout the period 1523–26, despite a continuing affiliation with Clement VII, Alcionio appears not to have published anything that might have ameliorated his situation. At least by March of 1527, he did hold a teaching post at the Studio Romano, lecturing to large audiences on Demosthenes' *De corona*. By that time, however, armies

<sup>79</sup> Federico Ubaldini, *Vita di Mons. Angelo Colocci: Edizione del testo originale italiano*, ed. Vittorio Fanelli (Vatican City, 1969), 114; *EE*, V, 167–70 (lett. 1479; Erasmus to Haio Herman, 31 August 1524): “Haec morosis censoribus et malignis arrosoribus responsa sunt; quorum odium te crebra contentione nolim exacerbare. Benevolorum catalogum libenter legi. Inter quos nullius nomen agnosco, praeterquam Sadoleti, Alcyonii, et Coricii.”

<sup>80</sup> The autograph copy of the letter, dated 1 April 1524, is preserved in the Bibliothèque Nationale de Paris, MS Ital. 2033, fols. 5r–6v. We are grateful to April Shelford for obtaining for us a photocopy of this letter. On Francesco del Nero's service as vice-depositor in Florence, see Bullard, *Filippo Strozzi*, 119–150, esp. 134–35.

<sup>81</sup> BN (Paris), MS Ital. 2033, fol. 5r–v: “. . . son povero, et son necessitato aiutarmi del mio.”

<sup>82</sup> BAV, MS Vat. Lat. 5892, fols. 225r–28v. See Kenneth Gouwens, “Ciceronianism and Collective Identity: Defining the Boundaries of the Roman Academy, 1525,” *Journal of Medieval and Renaissance Studies*, 23 (1993), 173–95.

<sup>83</sup> BAV, MS Vat. Lat. 5892, fol. 227v: “Hac una re mirabilis, quod cum videret neminem, qui aperte rideret, non commovebatur, non ab ineptijs temperabat. Credo sic interpretabatur, nos dulcedine, et suavitate orationis suae oblectatos ridere.”

<sup>84</sup> See Gouwens, “Ciceronianism.”

employed by Emperor Charles V had reached Tuscany and were menacing Rome. As Pope Clement struggled to raise a sum that might buy off the imperial troops commanded by Charles de Bourbon, papal patronage of humanists declined further. Thus Negri speculated that Alcionio and others in the Studio would “teach this year for free.”<sup>85</sup> But things got even worse. When Bourbon’s troops sacked Rome on 6 May 1527, Alcionio fled into the safety of Castel Sant’Angelo. When the siege was first lifted, he sought refuge with Clement’s archrival, the imperialist Cardinal Pompeo Colonna. Soon, however, he fell ill, and probably not long after the Imperialist army left Rome in February 1528, he died, evidently little lamented.<sup>86</sup>

One would be hard pressed (and probably misguided) to portray Alcionio as a “typical” Renaissance humanist. To be sure, his unrealistically elevated self-estimation (or, at least, self-presentation) shows clearly what contemporaries knew: he was simply not on par with the intellectual leaders of his day. Nonetheless, his plight and the manner in which he handled it may remind one of the practices of more prominent humanists, such as Petrarch, Valla, or George of Trebizond. All of them had moved from place to place, as opportunities emerged, rather than occupying a fixed institutional niche; at least in terms of years spent in one place working for a particular patron, their careers did not differ substantially from his. What is more, all three were quite actively self-promoting, and assertive of their exceptional abilities even when these were not consistently in evidence. Why is it, then, that Alcionio’s boastfulness was so markedly an object of ridicule? Be it noted that all the above criticisms of his character and ability date from no earlier than the 1520s, and they run directly counter to his earlier reputation as perhaps the fittest young scholar of Greek and Latin in the Venice of his time. What, then, was the intellectual ecology of the Italian peninsula in the 1520s, and how might it have been inhospitable to the extravagant self-promotion of this particular, increasingly maladapted humanist?

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<sup>85</sup> *LP*, fol. 106r (Negri to Michiel, 25 March 1527): “L’Alcionio legge Demostene la prima Olinthiaca, con molta frequentia d’auditori: ma credo, che et esso, et gli altri quest’ anno leggeranno per l’amor di Dio.”

<sup>86</sup> Pierio Valeriano, *De litteratorum infelicitate, libri duo* (Venice, 1620), 62–63, provides the only known primary-source account of these events. See now the important edition and translation of the text by Julia Haig Gaisser, *Pierio Valeriano on the Ill Fortune of Learned Men: A Renaissance Humanist and His World* (Ann Arbor, 1999).

4. *The Decorum of Self-Assertion and the Constraints of Courtly Culture*

Alcionio's vaunting of his abilities in the dedications to his Aristotle translations was not an isolated occurrence: evidently he frequently overstated not only the quality and originality of his work but also its quantity and provenance. Thus Lilio Gregorio Giraldi, in his *Two Dialogues Concerning Contemporary Poets*, has an interlocutor suggest vain-glorious and deception on Alcionio's part:

He is in the habit of boasting openly that he has in hand a tragedy concerning the death of Christ, with "all the traditional meters deployed perfectly," as he himself has been accustomed to say. Although I don't really believe it myself, nevertheless he managed to convince some.<sup>87</sup>

This brings to mind Negri's account of Alcionio's Pentecost oration, which began with similarly extravagant assertions of novelty: after dismissing what the Church Fathers had written on his subject as foolish and barbaric, he promised to disclose "new and unheard-of things."<sup>88</sup> An undated epigram on Alcionio's efforts to translate Galen, perhaps from Antonio Tebaldeo's pen, similarly suggests immoderate claims:

Once she'd read Galen, by chance, in Alcionio's translation,  
Greece started to pale and then spoke with a sorrowful moan:  
"Till now, I've called barbarous everyone save for my nation;  
Now, Latium aside, they're all barbarous—even my own!"<sup>89</sup>

More seriously still, Paolo Giovio argued that Alcionio's *De exsilio* showed evidence of a style so Ciceronian that it lent credence to the theory that he had copied parts of it from Cicero's *De gloria* and then destroyed the original: "For [many] observed that in it, as in a varied patchwork, were interwoven brilliant threads of rich purple,

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<sup>87</sup> Lilio Gregorio Giraldi, *[Dialogi duo] de poetis nostrorum temporum*, ed. Karl Wotke (Berlin, 1894), 39: "solet ille vulgo iactare sese tragoediam de Christi nece in manus [*sic*] habere omnibus, ut ipse dicere solitus est, servatis numeris; id licet ego minus credam, nonnullos tamen, ut id illi crederent, effecit."

<sup>88</sup> Vat. Lat. 5892, fol. 225v: "Primum a maledictis est exorsus, carpens quotquot de Spiritu Sancto scripsere, tum Graecos, tum Latinos, quod inepte admodum et barbore de huiusmodi re pertractaverint. Nova et inaudita se allaturum pollicitus est. . . ."

<sup>89</sup> Vat. Lat. 2835, fol. 235r: "Alcioni modo legisset cum forte Galenum/Palluit, et summo graecia ait gemitu.//Iam mihi gens omnis, praeter me, barbara dicta est./ Nunc praeter latium, meque aliasque voco." Anne Reynolds of the University of Sydney kindly brought this poem to our attention.



while all the other colors were dim.”<sup>90</sup> The following year, Paolo Manuzio made this accusation more explicitly, noting the disappearance of the *De gloria* from a monastic library to which (he alleges) Alcionio had enjoyed privileged access.<sup>91</sup> No scholar in subsequent centuries has found these charges credible. Still and all, published decades after Alcionio’s death, they evidence how his detractors would persist in pointing to his defects as an imitator of classical models and in invalidating the image of himself that he had constructed for public consumption.

In assessing Alcionio’s failure to adhere to the principles of literary and social decorum, we must acknowledge that these principles were not unchanging verities, but instead were historically contingent creations.<sup>92</sup> While in his case the fashioning of a public image of an orator was circumscribed by openly hostile peer review, *all* scholars, then as now, must operate within the confines of convention and expectation, lest they be either ignored or ostracized. Here, an observation made by Milan Kundera in *The Book of Laughter and Forgetting* may be apposite:

The best of all possible progressive ideas is the one which is provocative enough so its supporters can feel proud of being different, but popular enough so the risk of isolation is precluded by cheering crowds confident of victory.<sup>93</sup>

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<sup>90</sup> Gioivo, *Elogia*, trans. Gragg, 152–53. The Latin runs as follows (Meregazzi, ed., *Gli elogi*, 133): “luculento opere ‘De toleranda exilii fortuna’ ita eruditionis ac eloquentiae famam sustentabat, ut ex libro ‘De gloria’ Ciceronis, quem nefaria malignitate aboleverat, multorum iudicio confectum crederetur. In eo enim, tanquam vario centone, praeclara excellentis purpurae fila languentibus caeteris coloribus intertexta notabatur.”

<sup>91</sup> Paolo Manuzio, *In epistolas Ciceronis ad Atticum, Pauli Manutii commentarius . . .* (Venice, 1547), fol. 446r–v: “DE GLORIA: libros duos significat, quos de gloria scripsit: qui usque ad patrum nostrorum aetatem pervenerunt: nam Bernardus Iustinianus in indice librorum suorum nominat Ciceronem de gloria. is liber postea, cum universam bibliothecam Bernardus monacharum monasterio legasset, magna conquisitus cura, ne utiquam est inventus. nemini dubium fuit, quin Petrus Alcionius, cui monachae medico suo eius tractandae bibliothecae potestatem fecerunt, homo improbus furto averterit. & sane in eius opusculo de exilio, aspersa non nulla deprehenduntur, quae non olere Alcionium auctorem, sed aliquanto praestantiorum artificem videantur.” (from Manuzio’s commentary on Book XV, lett. 29 of Cicero’s letters to Atticus)

<sup>92</sup> We are grateful to Jessica Wolfe of the University of North Carolina for suggesting this fruitful line of inquiry.

<sup>93</sup> Milan Kundera, *The Book of Laughter and Forgetting*, tr. Michael Henry Heim (Harmondsworth, Middlesex, 1981), 201.

The relationship between imitation and creativity, while perforce always paradoxical, is nonetheless defined differently in different times and places.<sup>94</sup> Might Alcionio's spectacular failures betoken an inability to adjust to rapid shifts in the ground rules of imitation and of scholarly self-assertion?

The answer would appear to be equivocal. Certainly Alcionio himself should be faulted to the extent that his Ciceronianism precluded a personal voice that was flexible in expression. Long dismissed as an intellectual strait-jacket, Ciceronianism is presently being portrayed in a far more positive light, less as an impediment than as a linguistic option that, like any other, has advantages as well as disadvantages, that facilitates some kinds of communication even as it constrains others.<sup>95</sup> Similarly, with respect to the imitation of Virgil, G. W. Pigman III has emphasized the subtlety and complexity of the poetry of Marco Girolamo Vida who, like his contemporary, Alcionio, was accused by contemporaries of literary theft. Against such charges, writes Pigman, "Vida takes a defiant stance; he has no intention of hiding his thefts but glories in revealing them."<sup>96</sup> Yet Alcionio's case differs in that he was accused not only of excessive and unacknowledged appropriation of the writings of others, but also of a failure to digest adequately the literary *nugae* that he had stolen. If he has been a scavenger preying upon the surviving texts of classical authors, he has hardly been unique in doing so; if in fact he did destroy the only surviving manuscript of Cicero's *De gloria*, that is certainly heinous behavior, but not *ipso facto* proof that he has imitated models incompetently in his own writings; but what *is* to the point is the assertion that he has not internalized what he has studied, i.e., that he has not made Cicero's phrases and structures his own to the extent that they can facilitate some degree of originality.

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<sup>94</sup> See Martin L. McLaughlin, *Literary Imitation in the Italian Renaissance: The Theory and Practice of Literary Imitation in Italy from Dante to Bembo* (Oxford, 1995).

<sup>95</sup> See esp. G. W. Pigman III, "Neo-Latin Imitation of the Latin Classics," in *Latin Poetry and the Classical Tradition: Essays in Medieval and Renaissance Literature*, ed. Peter Godman and Oswyn Murray (Oxford, 1990), 199–210; John Monfasani, "The Ciceronian Controversy," in *The Cambridge History of Literary Criticism*, vol. 3, *The Renaissance*, ed. Glyn P. Norton (Cambridge, 1999), 395–401; and Marc Fumaroli, *L'Age de l'éloquence: rhétorique et "res literaria", de la Renaissance au seuil de l'époque classique* (Geneva, 1980), which argues that much of what contemporaries found objectionable was not the imitation of Cicero *per se*, but an extreme Ciceronianism that constrained expression and was so stilted as to be laughable.

<sup>96</sup> Pigman, "Neo-Latin Imitation," 210.

It is telling that metaphors of digestion appear in two of the most scathing accounts of Alcionio's performance: Negri's letter on the Pentecost oration, and Giovio's mock-encomium of Alcionio in his *Elogia virorum illustriorum*. In the midst of ridiculing Alcionio's violations of decorum both in language and in mannerisms, Negri marvels at Alcionio's over-enthusiastic execution of the *osculum pedis* that he was obliged to perform in deference to Pope Clement:

But what a show it was when, about to speak, he had thrown himself at the feet of the pope. For, prostrating himself with such great violence, he first seized the pope's feet with his teeth so that [Clement] at first was in a state of confusion, [and] soon after gave the appearance of one smiling. Our outstanding practitioner of speaking thought, I believe, that the pope's feet were a tidbit from a tastefully seasoned dish of that kind which, served to him at dinner not long before, he devoured most greedily.<sup>97</sup>

Thus the delicacy of the food contrasts sharply with the inelegance and rapacity of his appropriation of it. Giovio similarly used gluttony as a digestive metaphor, which he placed in proximity to his account of Alcionio's alleged theft from Cicero's *De gloria*:

He was the unblushing slave of his appetite, often dining two or three times on the same day—but “at other men's tables.” Nor did he show himself in this brutishness by any means a bad physician, for as soon as he got home to bed, he would relieve himself of the load of his debauchery by vomiting.<sup>98</sup>

The use of digestive imagery to describe the need for eclectic literary imitation (i.e., that one needs to digest different kinds of food in order for them to be a source of strength), a trope going back at least to Seneca, thus may refine our image of the unrefined Alcionio:

<sup>97</sup> BAV MS Vat. Lat. 5892, fols. 226v–227r: “At quale spectaculum fuit, cum dicturus sese ad pedes Pontificis Maximi proiecisset! Tanto enim impetu procumbens pedes principis apprehendit mordicus, ut ille primum trepidarit, mox speciem prebuerit subridentis. Existimavit, credo, egregius noster dicendi artifex pedes Pontificis Maximi esse pastillum ex catillo eleganter condito, quale illud fuit quod appositum sibi nuper in coena voravit avidissime.”

<sup>98</sup> Giovio, trans. Gragg (1935), 152. The Latin is as follows (*Gli elogi*, 133): “Erat enim impudens gulae mancipium, ita ut eodem saepe die bis et ter aliena tamen quadra coenitaret; nec in ea foeditate malus omnino medicus, quod domi demum in lecti limine per vomitum ipso crapulae onere levaretur.” We substitute “tables” for Gragg's “boards.”

to the extent that he has in fact regurgitated undigested tidbits of Cicero, he has failed manifestly in his effort to emulate antiquity.<sup>99</sup> Similarly, in his haste to make a reputation as a translator, he has not fully internalized Aristotle, as Sepúlveda's critique makes abundantly clear.

In fairness to Alcionio, we should recognize that the 1520s was a dynamic decade in which the roles of Italian humanists, like the roles of the courts in which they sought preferment, were undergoing significant change. Scholars of Renaissance vernacular literature, notably those who study the writings of Ariosto, Berni, and (somewhat more problematically) Castiglione, have offered nuanced readings of how those authors both gave voice to and contributed to the cultural transformations that accompanied the subjugation of the Italian peninsula to foreign control.<sup>100</sup> Just as Italians were losing political autonomy, so too the scope for decorous boasting by courtiers was being circumscribed, a development poignantly evident in Castiglione's *Cortegiano*—itself the work of a professional diplomat and soldier which was completed in the 1520s.<sup>101</sup> In making a broader argument about sixteenth- and early seventeenth-century European literature, David Quint has described how Castiglione's interlocutors discuss the advisability of adapting courtly understatement and dissimulation in place of outright self-praise.<sup>102</sup> Quint ties this transformation to its wider political context, an "enforced servility" of aristocrats in the new courtly culture who, in an effort to disguise

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<sup>99</sup> On the trope of digestive imitation and its contexts in Cicero and in Trecento and Quattrocento authors, see McLaughlin, *Literary Imitation*, 25, 100, and 203n.

<sup>100</sup> See esp. Albert Russell Ascoli, *Ariosto's Bitter Harmony: Crisis and Evasion in the Italian Renaissance* (Princeton, 1987); Anne Reynolds, *Renaissance Humanism at the Court of Clement VII: Francesco Berni's "Dialogue against Poets" in Context. Studies, with an Edition and Translation* (New York, 1997); and Daniel Javitch, introduction, in Baldassare Castiglione, *The Book of the Courtier: The Singleton Translation; an Authoritative Text, Criticism*, ed. Daniel Javitch (New York, 2002).

<sup>101</sup> On this theme we refer to the thesis of David Quint, "Bragging Rights: Honor and Courtesy in Shakespeare and Spenser," in *Creative Imitation: New Essays on Renaissance Literature in Honor of Thomas M. Greene*, ed. David Quint et al. (Binghamton, 1992), 391–430.

<sup>102</sup> Quint, "Bragging Rights," 399. Quint emphasizes more the self-expression of nobles than that of their minions, but his description of Spenser's attacks on "court careerists who seek advancement and honors without performing virtuous deeds" (416) resonates with Anne Reynolds's account of Francesco Berni's critique of Pietro Aretino in the late 1520s. In general, a constraint upon meaningful political action has pressed below the surface the perennial impetus toward self-assertion.

their political subservience, don the “mask of humble, polite conformity that the honorably modest willingly put on in a court world without boasting and bravado.”<sup>103</sup>

This is a fascinating argument that may apply widely, but among the prominent exceptions to it one should note Benvenuto Cellini and especially Pietro Aretino, whose largely successful assertions of self transgressed flamboyantly the new norm that Quint posits. Alcionio’s vaulting ambition and exaggerated claims for his own abilities may thus represent a response that could, for some, be adaptive to the new environment. In any case, to whatever extent a culture of *riservatezza* may have been taking hold in the literary-courtly milieu, it could juxtapose only awkwardly with the kinds of self-assertion that humanists of the early Cinquecento routinely made in their dedicatory letters.<sup>104</sup> They saw the pursuit of fame, particularly of the sort that could be shared with one’s patrons, as virtuous behavior, not as something to be shunned.

We may surmise, then, that Alcionio’s fatal shortcoming was that both in social conduct and in literary self-presentation, he underestimated the importance of tempering his quest for scholarly renown with an appearance of moderation, restraint, and judiciousness. Most likely he did not make off with the only surviving copy of Cicero’s *On Glory*; but he did try to appropriate for himself the “glory” of Cicero by arrogating entire passages from the Arpinate, rather than by making Cicero’s eloquence his own through long and systematic study. His brash self-assertion, meanwhile, was particularly ill-suited to the intellectual ecology of 1520s Italy, when exemplars both in literature and in politics confronted reduced possibilities. In Castiglione’s *Courtier*, the interlocutor “Ottaviano”—modeled on the nobleman and sometime doge of Genoa, Ottaviano Fregoso—counsels moderation and understatement rather than conspicuous self-assertion. The real-life Fregoso, who from 1515 to 1522 had governed Genoa on behalf of the French, was expelled from power in May 1522 by troops of the Emperor Charles V. Despite the efforts of Castiglione to ransom him, Fregoso would spend his final two years imprisoned

<sup>103</sup> Quint, “Bragging Rights,” 430.

<sup>104</sup> See the argument of Karl Enekel, “In Search of Fame: Self-Representation in Neo-Latin Humanism,” in *Medieval and Renaissance Humanism: Rhetoric, Representation and Reform*, ed. Stephen Gersh and Bert Roest (Leiden, 2003), 93–113.

in an imperial fortress on the island of Ischia.<sup>105</sup> It is perhaps an indicator of Pietro Alcionio's infelicitous timing that, little more than a year before Fregoso was ousted from power in Genoa, the humanist had published the prefatory letter dedicating to him the vaunted, and soon controversial, translations of writings on animals by Aristotle.

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<sup>105</sup> The imperial army that conquered Genoa in May 1522 was led by the outstanding military commander Ferdinando Francesco d'Avalos, the marquis of Pescara, husband of Vittoria Colonna, and it was in his family's fortress on Ischia that Fregoso died in May 1524. See Brunelli, "Fregoso."

## CHAPTER FIFTEEN

### VILLAMENA'S KANGAROO

Louise Rice

The Italian printmaker Francesco Villamena (ca. 1560–1624) never saw a kangaroo, nor could he have known of the existence of such an animal. He died five years before Francisco Pelsaert, commander of the Dutch East Indiaman *Batavia*, was shipwrecked on the Abrolhos Islands about forty miles off the Australian coast and wrote in his journal what is generally considered to be the first description by a European of an Australian marsupial.<sup>1</sup> Yet in an engraving by Villamena securely datable to 1602 a kangaroo, or a creature remarkably like one, makes what would seem to be an egregiously anachronistic

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<sup>1</sup> The story of the wreck of the *Batavia* reads like a seventeenth-century *Lord of the Flies*. The commander having taken off in the ship's boat in search of water, mutineers began a reign of terror, raping and murdering many of the passengers and crew. Pelsaert eventually reached Java and returned with a ship to rescue those he had left behind; the mutineers were rounded up, whipped, mutilated, and then executed. In the midst of the carnage, Pelsaert somehow found the time to look around him and record his observations of the rocky islands on which he had been forced to land. "We found large numbers of a species of cats, which are very strange creatures: they are about the size of a hare, their head resembling that of a civet-cat; the forepaws are very short, about the length of a finger, on which the animal has five nails or fingers, resembling those of a monkey's paw. Its hind legs, by contrast, are upwards of half an ell in length, and it walks on these only [...]. Their manner of generation or procreation is exceedingly strange and highly worth observing. Below the belly the female carries a pouch into which you may put your hand; inside this pouch are her teats, and we have found that the young ones grow up in the pouch with the nipples in their mouths. We have seen some young ones living there which were only the size of a bean, though at the same time perfectly proportioned, so it seems certain that they grow there out of the nipples of the mammae, from which they draw their food until they are grown up and able to walk. Even then, they go back into the pouch even though quite large, and the dam runs off with them." Henrietta Drake-Brockman, *Voyage to disaster; the life of Francisco Pelsaert, covering his Indian report to the Dutch East India Company and the wreck of the ship Batavia in 1629 off the coast of Western Australia together with the full text of his journals concerning the rescue voyages, the mutiny on the Abrolhos Islands and the subsequent trials of the mutineers* (Sydney, 1963); cited in Ronald Younger, *Kangaroo: Images through the Ages* (Hutchinson, Australia, 1988), 40. To judge from the diminutive scale of the animals ("about the size of a hare"), what Pelsaert saw were not kangaroos but a species of wallaby.

appearance (Figures 15.1–15.2).<sup>2</sup> In one of four emblems set into the architectural framework of the print, a lion terrorizes the offspring of a large and powerful marsupial who scrambles for safety into its mother's pouch, with the motto TVTA FIDES VBI CERTVS AMOR ("Trust is secure where love is true").<sup>3</sup> The meaning of the emblem, having to do with parental fondness and protection, is clear enough, but its zoological foundation is less obvious. How is it possible that a kangaroo can appear in a print of this date? Are we to conclude that Europeans had some knowledge of macropods even before Pelsaert's ill-fated voyage of 1629? Or is there a simpler, less drastically revisionist explanation for this iconographic oddity?

The print was commissioned to decorate the thesis broadsheet of Don Fernando Fernández de Córdoba y Cardóna, the second son of the Spanish ambassador to Rome and a student at the Jesuits'

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Even earlier, the Spanish captain Diego de Prado y Tobar who voyaged to New Guinea in 1605–6 may have eaten a marsupial: "here we killed an animal which is in the shape of a dog, smaller than a greyhound, with a bare and scaly tail like that of a snake, and his testicles hang from a nerve like a thin cord; they say that it was the castor; we ate it and it was like venison." Wilma George identifies this creature as a scrub wallaby but points out that nothing in the Spaniard's description suggests that he recognized the animal's marsupial characteristics (no doubt because it was a male of the species he dined on). Following the voyages of Prado y Tobar and Pelsaert, no subsequent sightings of Australasian marsupials are recorded until William Dampier's voyages in 1697–1703. For the first European description of a true kangaroo we must wait for the expeditions of Captain Cook. See *New Light on the Discovery of Australia as Revealed by the Journal of Captain Don Diego de Prado y Tobar*, ed. Henry Stevens (London, 1930); Wilma George, *Animals and Maps* (London, 1969), 183–84.

<sup>2</sup> Vienna, Albertina; 330 × 420 mm. Pierre Jean Mariette, *Abécédario de P. J. Mariette et autres notes inédites de cet amateur sur les arts et les artistes* (6 vols.; Paris, 1851–60), VI, 80; Dorothee Kühn-Hattenhauer, *Das graphische Oeuvre des Francesco Villamena*, Ph.D. diss. (Berlin, 1979), 227. The painter Gaspare Celio (1571–1640) designed the composition and Villamena engraved it. The state illustrated here bears only Villamena's signature, but the inventor's name appears alongside Villamena's in another, possibly later state: "Gaspar Caelius inventor/F[ranciscus] Villamena f[ecit]" (an example in the Vatican Library is illustrated in Eckhard Leuschner, "Francesco Villamena's Apotheosis of Alessandro Farnese and engraved reproductions of contemporary sculpture around 1600," *Simiolus*, 27 [1999], fig. 11). The authorship of the emblems in the four corners of the print is less certain, since details of this sort were often left blank in the drawing provided by the inventor, to be filled in by the engraver on the instructions of an iconographic advisor; for simplicity's sake, I have referred to these emblems throughout as by Villamena.

<sup>3</sup> The motto is stitched together out of snippets of Virgil and Ovid, "tuta fides" coming from Dido's lament (*Aeneid*, IV.373) and "certus amor" from the story of the star-crossed lovers Pyramus and Thisbe (*Metamorphoses*, IV.156). Emblematic mottoes are often derived, like this one, from classical texts; the sources remain recognizable even as the meanings change with the context (see, for example, note 15 below).



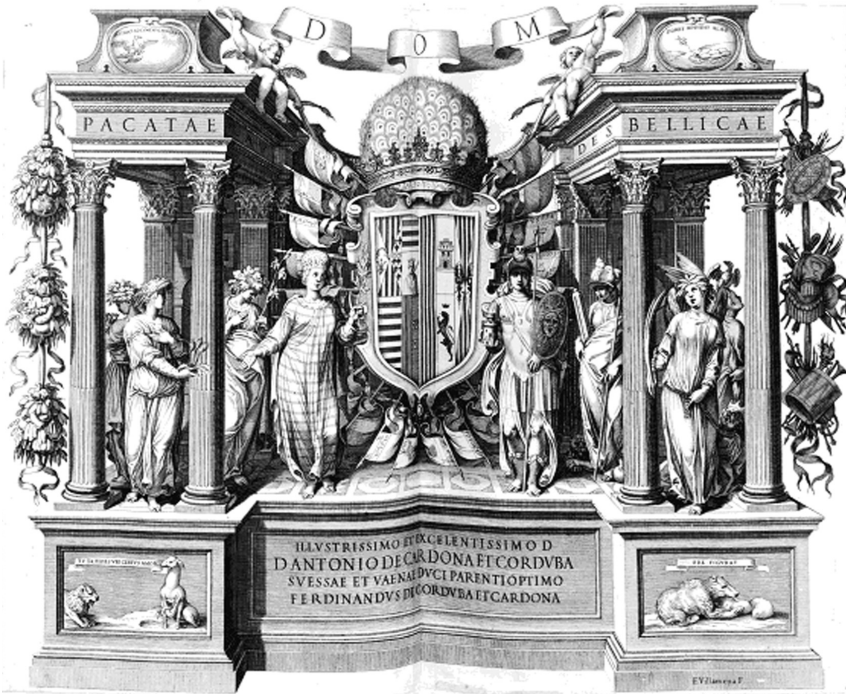


Figure 15.1. Francesco Villamena after Gaspare Celio, Thesis print of Don Fernando Fernández de Córdoba for his philosophy defense at the Collegio Romano, 1602.



Figure 15.2. Detail of Fig. 15.1.

Roman College, who publicly defended “all of philosophy” in the school’s main hall on 9 September 1602. Thesis defenses in Seicento Rome were festive affairs, staged with all the trappings of Baroque spectacle, and Don Fernando’s rivaled any that had gone before. Every cardinal in the city was present, along with sixty or so prelates and a host of high-ranking diplomats and noblemen.<sup>4</sup> Padre Bernardino Stefonio, professor of rhetoric at the college and one of the Society’s leading literati, devised the program and oversaw the production of the art, poetry, and music commissioned for the occasion.<sup>5</sup> It was he who determined the iconography of the thesis broadsheet, wrote the speeches delivered by Don Fernando at the beginning and at the end of the disputation, and composed celebratory Latin verses that were set to music and sung by multiple choirs with instrumental accompaniment at key moments throughout the event.<sup>6</sup> Both the speeches and the verses were published in the form of slim libretti, which were handed out to the members of the audience along with

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<sup>4</sup> Archivio della Pontificia Università Gregoriana (henceforth APUG), MS 2801, p. 505: [1602] “Furono anco diffuse alcune conclusioni di Filosofia dal figliolo dell’Ambasciatore di Spagna che fu l’Illustrissimo Signor D. Ferdinando di Cordova e Cardona, Abbate Rutense, Archidiacono e Canonico di Cordova, figlio di D. Antonio di Cordova Ambasciatore di Spagna, Duca di Sessa e Vaena. Furono diffuse nel salone del Collegio Romano con la maggior solennità che fusse veduta da un gran pezzo. Vi furono presenti tutti li cardinali di Roma con tutti li prelati della corte. Fece un Oratione et un Attione di gratia che si vedono stampati, opera del P. Bernardino Stefonio, che fu chierico del Seminario, oltre li versi lirici fatti in musica, quali pure sono stati opera del detto Padre.” See also APUG, MS 147, fol. 52 (cited in Riccardo Villoslada, *Storia del Collegio Romano dal suo inizio [1551] alla soppressione della Compagnia di Gesù [1773]* [Rome, 1954], 161; the entry is mistakenly dated 1600): “Il figliuolo dell’Ambasciatore di Spagna ha difesa tutta la Filosofia con gran solennità. Vi sono stati ventidue Cardinali, sessanta Prelati e molti Cavalieri;” BAV, MS Urb. Lat. 1070, fol. 520: “Giovedì il figlio maggiore del Duca di Sessa tenne pubbliche conclusioni in filosofia, ove intervennero da 19 cardinali, sendosi portato il giovane egregiamente.”

<sup>5</sup> Bernardino Stefonio (1560–1620) was the author of plays, poems, sermons, eulogies, epigrams, and emblems. Just two years before Don Fernando’s defense, his play *Flavia* was performed at the Roman College to international acclaim. See Marc Fumaroli, “Corneille disciple de la dramaturgie jésuite: Le *Crispus* e la *Flavia* du P. Bernardino Stefonio S.J.,” in *Héros et orateurs. Rhétorique et dramaturgie corneiliennes*, 2nd ed. (Geneva, 1996), 138–70; Bernardino Stefonio, *Crispus. Tragedia*, ed. Lucia Strappani (Rome, 1998, xxxi–xlvi); for a list of Stefonio’s other publications, see Carlos Sommervogel, *Bibliothèque de la Compagnie de Jésus* (11 vols.; Brussels and Paris, 1890–1932), VII, col. 46, *sv* “Bernardino Stefonio.”

<sup>6</sup> The identity of the composer who wrote and directed the music performed at Don Fernando’s defense is unknown. On the subject of Roman defense music generally, see my introduction to Domenico Allegri, *Music for an Academic Defense* (Rome, 1617), ed. Antony John (Middleton, Wisc., 2004).

the thesis broadsheet.<sup>7</sup> Although no intact example of Don Fernando's broadsheet has so far come to light (only Villamena's engraving survives), like other student broadsheets produced around the same time it would have been approximately a meter in height and would have featured, below the engraving, a dedicatory text followed by the theses themselves, that is to say, the philosophical propositions that the student was prepared to defend in response to challenges posed by his examiners. Handsomely designed and luxuriously produced, the decorated thesis broadsheet was the centerpiece of every major defense and a tangible and lasting memento of an otherwise ephemeral event.<sup>8</sup>

Don Fernando, who was not yet twenty at the time of his defense, must have been an accomplished student; he would not have been allowed to represent the college in so public a forum had his professors doubted his ability to perform at the highest level. Still, the presence of twenty-two cardinals at his defense had more to do with his illustrious parentage than his academic prowess. He was, after all, the son of one of the most influential men in Rome. Don Antonio Fernández de Córdoba y Cardóna (ca. 1551–1606), Duke of Sessa and Baena, Count of Cabra, and proud descendant of the “gran capitán” (Gonzales Fernández de Córdoba, who secured Spain's dominion over Naples in the early sixteenth century), represented the Spanish crown at the papal court from 1592 to 1603. By all accounts an effective and energetic diplomat, he made his presence

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<sup>7</sup> [Bernardino Stefonio, S.J.], *Carmen sex in partes chori distinctum & a musicis emodulatum quo die idem Illustriss. D.D. Ferdinandus de Corduba & Cardona publice philosophicae theses defendit in Coll. Romano Societatis Iesu* (Rome, n.d. [1602]); [idem], *Oratio habita ab Illustrissimo D.D. Ferdinando de Corduba et Cardona, Suessae et Vaenae Ducis Filio, Abbate Ruthens. Archidiacono et Canonico Codub. nonis septemb. quo die is Philosophiae Theses publice defendit Romae in Collegio Societatis Iesu MDCII* (Rome, 1602). Copies of the first of these pamphlets are in the Vatican Library and the Biblioteca Nazionale in Rome; the second is cited in Sommervogel (VII, col. 46), but I have so far been unable to locate a copy.

<sup>8</sup> On thesis defenses in seventeenth-century Rome, their academic content and their festive trappings, see Louise Rice, “Jesuit Thesis Prints and the Festive Academic Defence at the Collegio Romano,” *The Jesuits: Cultures, Sciences, and the Arts, 1540–1773*, ed. John W. O'Malley et al. (Toronto, 1999), 148–69; eadem, “Pietro da Cortona and the Roman Baroque Thesis Print,” in *Pietro da Cortona 1597–1669. Atti del convegno internazionale (Roma e Firenze, 12–15 novembre 1997)* (Rome and Milan, 1998), 189–200. It is not unusual that all we have of Don Fernando's broadsheet is the print. Although thesis broadsheets were produced in large numbers (often in runs of a thousand or more copies), they have a poor survival rate. They are large and difficult to store, and in the past collectors tended to disassemble them, discarding the texts, in which they had no interest, and preserving only the images.

felt in the Rome of Clement VIII, attending weekly audiences with the pope; coordinating the activities of the Spanish faction in the college of cardinals; attracting Roman clients to his king and securing their loyalty by doling out Spanish pensions and knighthoods; urging the canonization of the Spanish founder of the Society of Jesus, Ignatius Loyola, and involving himself in various other ways in the Society's affairs; sponsoring processions, fireworks displays, and other sorts of ephemeral spectacles at the Spanish church in Piazza Navona; and promoting a variety of other Spanish causes.<sup>9</sup> Not the least of his responsibilities as ambassador was to project, in his private as in his public life, a degree of magnificence worthy of the monarch he represented. He maintained an enormous household, entertained on a lavish scale, and treated family celebrations such as the marriage of his daughter to the son of the governor of Milan as occasions for extravagant ambassadorial display.<sup>10</sup> The academic defense of his son in the main hall of the Roman College he would have viewed in much the same way, as an opportunity to promote his own, his family's, and his nation's prestige, and for this reason made sure that it was conducted "con la maggior solennità che fusse veduta da un gran pezzo."<sup>11</sup>

Don Fernando dedicated his theses to his father.<sup>12</sup> Accordingly, the print features Don Antonio's coat of arms, topped with the feathered coronet of his duchy and set within a classicizing architectural frontispiece.<sup>13</sup> Flanking the arms are personifications of the duke's

<sup>9</sup> On the Duke of Sessa's embassy, see Ludwig von Pastor, *The History of the Popes* (40 vols.; London, 1924–53), XXIII, 80 and *passim*; XXIV, 174 and *passim*; Thomas James Dandeleit, *Spanish Rome 1500–1700* (New Haven, 2001), 96 and *passim*. For *avvisi* mentioning the duke's activities, see Ermete Rossi, "Roma ignorata," *Roma*, 12 (1934), 231 and *passim*; *ibid.*, 13 (1935), 230 and *passim*. For additional documentation, see *Archivo de la Embajada de España cerca de la Santa Sede*, ed. Luciano Serrano and José María Pou y Martí (3 vols. in 2; Rome, 1915–21), I, 67 and *passim*.

<sup>10</sup> It was expensive work, being the Spanish ambassador, and despite having a large income Don Antonio left Rome deeply in debt after his eleven years in office (Dandeleit, *Spanish Rome*, 128–29).

<sup>11</sup> See note 4 above.

<sup>12</sup> Don Fernando was the second of seven sons (see Alberto and Arturo García Carraffa, *Enciclopedia heráldica y genealógica hispano-americana* [88 vols.; Madrid, 1919–63], XXXIV, 15). His older brother Luis (1582–1642), who inherited their father's titles and estates when the latter died in 1606, is known above all for his lifelong patronage of the poet and playwright Lope de Vega, with whom he carried on a lively correspondence (see *Cartas de amor de Lope de Vega*, ed. D. Jordan [Buenos Aires, 1943]). Don Fernando was instead destined for the Church and by time of his defense had already been appointed abbot of Rute and archdeacon and canon of Cordoba.

<sup>13</sup> Ambassadorial coats of arms combine the heraldry of the individual on the left with the heraldry of the monarch he serves on the right, the two halves fused,

virtues, the peace-loving sort on the left under the inscription PACATAE LAVDES and the martial sort on the right under the inscription LAVDES BELLICAE. A personification of the duchy of Sessa on the left holds an olive branch symbolizing peace, while on the right Minerva, the goddess of wisdom, holds a castle, which doubles as an emblem of war and as an allusion to Castile. Each of the other personifications has as her attribute an element in the duke's complex heraldry: they hold, from left to right, the three rooks of the Requesens family, the thistles (cardoons) and the lilies of the house of Cardona, the lion of Leon, the chained Moorish king of the Fernández de Córdoba family, and the imperial spreadeagle. Garlands of fruits and vegetables symbolizing the bounty of peace on the left and trophies symbolizing the glory of war on the right provide festive decoration.

In the four corners of the print are emblems that evoke the dedication by illustrating concepts of parental love and nurturing. In the upper left, an eagle points its young towards the sun, with the motto AESTIMAT AD LVMEN VERVM GENVS ("before the light she appraises her true progeny"). Only eagles, the ancients believed, were capable of looking straight at the sun; thus an illegitimate eaglet would betray itself by blinking or turning away and would be thrown from the nest.<sup>14</sup> In the upper right, a silkworm emerges from its cocoon transformed into a moth, with the motto DOMVS ADDIDIT ALAS ("its house gives it wings").<sup>15</sup> In the lower right a bear licks her cubs into shape, with the motto ORE FIGVRAT ("she shapes with her mouth"). The idea that bears give birth to formless fetuses which they shape with their tongues into cubs is recorded by numerous ancient authors;<sup>16</sup> and although early modern naturalists knew it to be false (Ulisse Aldrovandi, for example, "from the testimony of his own eyes affirmeth, that in the Cabinet of the Senate of

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or impaled, to illustrate the notional identity of the king and his representative. Thus, in this instance, the quarterings on the left belong to Don Antonio's family arms and reflect the several noble lines that converge in his person, while the quarterings on the right are those of the royal house of Spain. An identical coat of arms, surmounted by the same distinctive coronet, appears in another engraving by Villamena, representing a miracle of Spain's patron saint, James; dedicated by the artist to Don Antonio, the print is not dated but the coat of arms indicates that it too must have been made during the duke's tenure as ambassador.

<sup>14</sup> Aristotle, *History of Animals*, IX.34; Pliny, *Natural History*, X.3.

<sup>15</sup> The motto is a variant of a phrase in Virgil's *Aeneid* (VIII, 224), where it is fear that gives wings to the feet of a terrified Cacus ("pedibus timor addidit alas").

<sup>16</sup> Aristotle, *History of Animals*, VI.30; Aelian, *On the Nature of Animals*, II.19 and VI.3; Pliny, *Natural History*, VIII.126; Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, XV.379–81.

Bononia, there was preserved in a Glass a Cub taken out of a Bear perfectly formed, and compleat in every part<sup>17</sup>),<sup>17</sup> it nevertheless remained a favorite conceit of emblematisers. Finally, in the lower left corner, is the emblem with which we are concerned, with its perplexing pre-discovery kangaroo.

What is this creature? She is unquestionably a marsupial, for no other animal carries her young as she does, in a pouch. But from where does she come? Marsupials are not native to Europe, Africa, or mainland Asia, but they do exist outside of Australia and the adjacent islands. There are a variety of American marsupials. Most of them are tiny animals, about the size of a mouse or shrew; the largest by far, the Virginia opossum (*Didelphis virginiana*), is no bigger than a well-fed house cat. In other ways, too, American marsupials differ from their Australian relatives. They walk on all fours, are mostly nocturnal, and are multiparous, having litters of seven or eight offspring. They do, however, share one crucial feature: the pouch in which they rear their young. Since the animal in the emblem cannot be from a continent as yet undiscovered, it follows that she is an inhabitant of the New World: not a kangaroo, after all, but an opossum.

Europeans encountered marsupials as soon as they landed on the American mainland. In 1500, the Spanish explorer Vicente Yáñez Pinzón brought a small South American opossum back with him to Spain and presented her to Ferdinand and Isabella. Although the animal expired shortly after reaching the Old World (her babies had died en route) and was nothing but a decomposing skin by the time she arrived at the court in Granada, all who saw the shriveled corpse marveled at this wonder of nature.<sup>18</sup>

<sup>17</sup> Thomas Browne, *Pseudodoxia Epidemica, or, Enquiries into Very Many Received Tenents, and Commonly Presumed Truths* (1st ed. London, 1646; London, 1672), 128–29.

<sup>18</sup> [Pietro Martire d'Anghiera], *Libretto de tutta la navigatione de Re de Spagna de le Isole et terreni novamente trovati*, tr. Angelo Trevisan (Venice, 1504), chap. 30 [p. 27]: “Un nuovo animale quasi monstuoso che el corpo & muso de volpe: & la Groppla & li piedi drietto de simia: & quelli davanti quasi chome de homo: le orecchie come la notola: et ha sutto el ventre uno altro ventre di fora come una tascha dove asconde soi figlioli dapo nasciuti: ne mai li lassa insire sino atanto che da loro medemi siano bastanti a nutrirse: & excepto quando volgiono lactare. Uno de questi tali animali insieme con suoi figlioli fo portato de Sibia a Granata ali serenissimi Re. Tamen in nave moritte i fioli, & el grande in Spagna, li quali cosi morti forono visti da molte & diverse persone.” A more detailed account appears in Pietro Martire d'Anghiera, *Oceanea decas*, 1511; reprinted in *De rebus oceanicis & orbe novo decades tres* (Basel, 1533), decade I, Book IX, fol. 21r–v: “Inter eas arbores monstrosus illud animal vulpino rostro, cerco pithecca cauda, vespertioneis auribus, manibus humanis, pedibus simiam aemulans: quod natos iam filios alio gestat, quocunque proficiscatur,

The opossum held enormous fascination for sixteenth-century naturalists.<sup>19</sup> Humanist zoographers like Konrad Gesner scoured classical literature for anything comparable, but apart from a passing and puzzling reference in the work of the 2nd-century B.C. grammarian Agatharchides of Cnidos to an animal he calls a “doghead” that “carries her womb outside her body” they found nothing analogous.<sup>20</sup> Here was a creature entirely new, and precisely because it was not described by the canonical classical authors (Aristotle, Pliny, etc.), it seemed at first something marvelous, even monstrous, an oddity outside the mainstream of natural history.<sup>21</sup> Lacking ancient authority, the first writers to describe the animal resorted to a simplistic kind of comparative anatomy: the opossum was “a new and semi-monstrous animal which has the body and snout of a fox, the rump and hind legs of a monkey, forelegs that are almost human, and the ears of a bat.”<sup>22</sup> Accounts of

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utero exteriore in modum magnae crumenae, repertum est. Id animal licet mortuum tu ipse mecum vidisti, convolvisti, crumenamque illam novum uterum, novum naturae remedium, quo a venatoribus aut alias a caeteris violentis & rapacibus animalibus natos liberet, illos secum asportando, admiratus es. Experimento esse comperit aiunt, eo semper utero crumenali animal filios secum portare, nec illos inde unquam emittere, nisi aut recreandi au lactandi gratia, donec sibi victum per se quaeritare didicerint. Cum filijs animal ipsum deprehenderant, ast in navibus catuli propedem perierunt, mater autem filijs per aliquot menses superstitit: sed & ipsa tandem tantam aeris & ciborum mutationem ferre nequivit.”

<sup>19</sup> Among sixteenth-century authors who write about the animal are Gonzalo Fernández de Oviedo, *Sumario de la natural historia de las Indias* (1st ed. Toledo, 1526) ed. Manuel Ballesteros (Madrid, 1986), 107–8; Sebastian Münster, *Cosmographia universalis*, (1st ed. Basel, 1544; Basel, 1558), 1187; Girolamo Cardano, *De subtilitate libri xxi*, (1st ed. Nuremberg, 1550; Basel, 1582), 563; Konrad Gesner, *Historia animalium. Liber primus de quadrupedibus viviparis*, (1st ed. Zurich, 1551; Frankfurt, 1602), 870–71; Pietro Bembo, *Historiae Venetae libri XII* (Venice, 1551), Book VI, fol. 84–84v; Galeotto Cei, *Viaggio e relazione delle Indie (1539–1553)*, ed. Francesco Surdich (Rome, 1992), 113; Julius Caesar Scaliger, *Exotericarum exercitationum liber XV de subtilitate ad Hieronymum Cardanum* (1st ed. Paris, 1557; Frankfurt, 1592), 665 (Exercitatio ccvi.10, “Animalia crumentata”); Hans Staden, *Geschichte eines Landes, gelegen in der Neuen Welt, America genannt* (Marburg, 1557; reprinted in *Latin in Americae tertia pars memorabilem provinciae Brasiliae historiam continens . . . scriptam a Ioane Stadio Homburgensi Hesso*, ed. Theodor de Bry [Frankfurt, 1592], 129); Jean de Léry, *Histoire d’un voyage fait en la terre du Bresil, autrement dite Amerique* (Geneva, 1580), 138.

<sup>20</sup> Gesner, *Historia animalium*, 870. For the relevant passage in Agatharchides of Cnidos, see his *On the Erythraean Sea*, ed. and tr. Stanley Burstein (London, 1989), 122 (the editor tentatively identifies the “doghead” as the Hamadrayas baboon).

<sup>21</sup> For a particularly interesting discussion of the phenomenon, see William Ashworth, “Remarkable Humans and Singular Beasts,” *The Age of the Marvellous*, ed. Joy Kenseth, ex. cat. (Hanover, N.H., 1991), 114–21. See also Susan Scott Parrish, “The Female Opossum and the Nature of the New World,” *William and Mary Quarterly*, 54 (1997), esp. 476–87; Victoria Dickenson, *Drawn from Life. Science and Art in the Portrayal of the New World* (Toronto, 1998), 40–44.

<sup>22</sup> See note 18 above.

this sort conjure up an image of a curious hybrid, made up of parts of known animals, combined in unknown and preposterous ways. Gesner called it a *simivulpa*, or monkey-fox, thus perpetuating the notion of its hybridity even while legitimizing the animal with a Latin name.

For at least a hundred years following the discovery, reliable information about the habits and appearance of opossums remained extremely hard to come by. The earliest descriptions, purportedly based on eyewitness accounts, contain striking errors and omissions. It is clear, for example, that the function of the marsupial pouch and the location of the teats within it were not well understood: "she has under her belly a second external belly like a pocket where she hides her young after giving birth; nor does she allow them out before they are old enough to fend for themselves, except when they want to nurse." By the mid-sixteenth century more accurate reports were reaching Europe, but none of them was detailed enough to give anyone who had not actually seen an opossum an adequate idea of what it looked like.<sup>23</sup> One might have expected that scientists would have had access to specimens, either living or preserved, imported from America. But if others after Pinzón returned home with opossums, we do not hear of them. There was a lively trade in many other New World animals. Armadillos hung from the rafters of many a *Wunderkammer*; North American turkeys and South American parrots preened in many a princely aviary. But opossums remained virtually unknown.<sup>24</sup> It is clear from what he writes that Gesner had never seen one and depended entirely for his knowledge on the descriptions of others; nor does

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<sup>23</sup> The most complete description is that of Francisco Hernández, composed during his five-year stay in Mexico in the 1570s. He was the first to record the opossum's habit of playing dead when frightened. Hernández was chiefly interested in the animal's medicinal properties, which are concentrated primarily in its tail. When dried and ground into a powder, opossum tail is beneficial in flushing out the urinary tract, stimulating sexual activity, initiating menstruation, inducing labor, facilitating lactation, curing fractures, and soothing colic and other ailments of the stomach; applied topically, it is also useful in extracting thorns. Hernández's work remained in manuscript form until the seventeenth century, however, and was little known outside of Madrid. See *Rerum medicarum Novae Hispaniae thesaurus seu plantarum, animalium, mineralium Mexicanorum historia . . .* (Rome, 1651), Book IX, 330–31; *The Mexican Treasury. The Writings of Dr. Francisco Hernández*, ed. Simon Varey (Stanford, 2000), 219. On the publication history of Hernández's treatise, see Silvia de Renzi, "Writing and Talking of Exotic Animals," in *Books and the Sciences in History*, ed. Marina Frasca-Spada and Nick Jardine (Cambridge, 2000), 151–67.

<sup>24</sup> The opossum is a notoriously unlovely creature. "Il put," writes Jean de Léry (*Histoire d'un voyage*); and Edward Tyson calls it a "Foetid stinking Animal" (Tyson, *Carigeya, seu marsupiale Americanum, or, The anatomy of an opossum dissected at Gresham College* [London, 1698]). Its unpleasant characteristics may explain why it was not





Figure 15.3. Opossum, from Martin Waldseemüller's *Carta marina* (detail), 1516.

there seem to have been a marsupial among the “18,000 different things”<sup>25</sup> in the natural history collection of Ulisse Aldrovandi.

Pictorial representations of opossums were even less satisfactory than the verbal descriptions on which scientists had to rely. The earliest known European illustration of a marsupial appears in Martin Waldseemüller's world map of 1516 (Figure 15.3).<sup>26</sup> Superimposed over the part of South America that is today Venezuela and Brazil (labeled TERRA CANIBALORVM), she is a peculiar sort of animal, rather like a bear, with a basketball-shaped protuberance hanging from her rib cage. The artist has clearly never laid eyes on an opossum and bases the image on Pietro Martire d'Anghiera's description of the animal, first published in 1504, which is paraphrased in the accompanying caption.<sup>27</sup> Because the text makes no mention of the opossum's long prehensile tail, the artist has assigned her the merest stub; and

among the animals regularly exported from America. See Ashworth, “Remarkable Humans and Singular Beasts,” esp. at 124.

<sup>25</sup> Lorraine Daston and Katharine Park, *Wonders and the Order of Nature, 1150–1750* (New York, 1998), 154. For Aldrovandi's description of the *simivulpa*, see his *De quadrupedibus digitatis libri tres* (Bologna, 1637), 223–24.

<sup>26</sup> Charles Eastman, “Early Portrayals of the Opossum,” *The American Naturalist*, 49 (1915), 589; George, *Animals and Maps*, 61–62; Ashworth, “Remarkable Humans and Singular Beasts,” 124; Parrish, “Female Opossum,” 483–84; Dickenson, *Drawn from Life*, 41–42.

<sup>27</sup> “Reperitur hic animal hanc effigiem preferens huiusque sub ventre reservaculum quo Pullos genitos comportat nec illos nisi lactandi gratia emittere solet; oblatum est tale regi Hispanie in civitate Granata.” Cf. note 18 above.

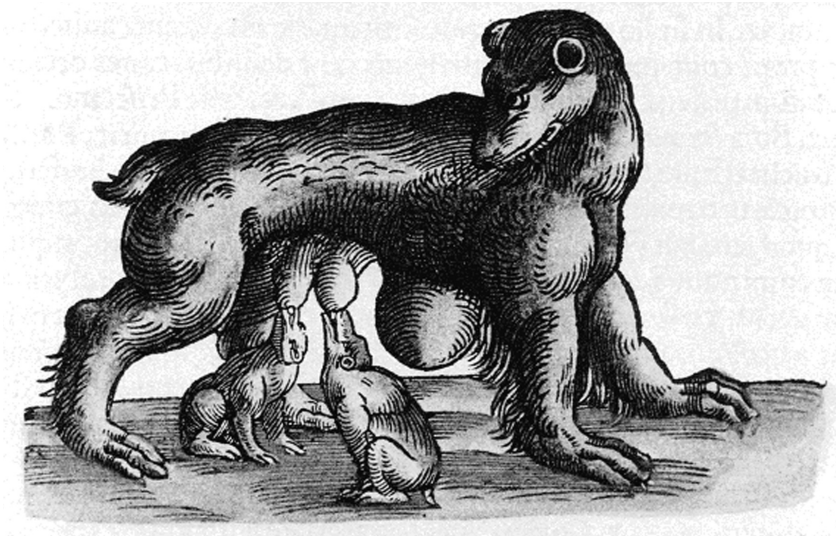


Figure 15.4. Opossum (*Simivulpa*), from Konrad Gesner, *Historia animalium*, I, Zurich, 1551.

because the text specifically states that the young stay in the mother's pouch *except when they suckle*, he locates her teats outside the pouch between her hind legs. The figure from the Waldseemüller *mappamundi* reappears in numerous subsequent maps and atlases and from there migrates into the natural history texts. Those who had seen opossums with their own eyes challenged its accuracy. Galeotto Cei, for instance, observed that "in certain antique maps they are depicted without a tail or with only a very short tail, whereas I have seen them held in the hand by their tails, which are as long as our cats' tails."<sup>28</sup> Even Gesner questioned the image and distanced himself from it with the phrase "*si quid ei credendum*."<sup>29</sup> Nevertheless, lacking any more reliable depiction, he too reproduced the illustration and thus helped to keep it in circulation (Figure 15.4).<sup>30</sup>

<sup>28</sup> Cei, *Viaggio e relazione delle Indie*, 113: "Per certi mappamondi vecchi li dipingono senza o con poca coda: io li ho visti tenuti in mano per la coda, lunga come la delli nostri gatti, o più."

<sup>29</sup> Gesner, *Historia animalium*, 870.

<sup>30</sup> On the repeated reuse of certain zoological icons, see William Ashworth, "The Persistent Beast: Recurring Images in Early Zoological Illustration," in *The Natural Sciences and the Arts: Aspects of Interaction from the Renaissance to the Twentieth Century*, ed. Allen Ellenius (Stockholm, 1985), 46–66; Ashworth, "Emblematic Natural History of the Renaissance," *Cultures of Natural History*, ed. Nick Jardine *et al.* (Cambridge, 1995), 17–37. See also Eastman, "Early Portrayals"; Dickenson, *Drawn from Life*, 43–44.



Figure 15.5. Etienne Delaune, *America*, 1575.

Given the limited state of scientific knowledge, it is hardly surprising that artists in the sixteenth century were rather at a loss when it came to depicting opossums. Some simply relied on the Waldseemüller icon,<sup>31</sup> but others let their imaginations run wild. In one of the earliest surviving allegorical representations of America, from a series of Four Continents published in 1575, the French painter and printmaker Etienne Delaune represents the New World as a naked woman with bow and arrows and a feathered headdress, accompanied by a large, griffenlike quadruped, with a curling tale, long neck, and clawed feet (Figure 15.5). Hugh Honour identifies

<sup>31</sup> See the *simivulpa* in Marcus Gheeraerts' engraving of *America* (illustrated in Hugh Honour, *The European Vision of America*, ex. cat. [Cleveland, 1975], cat. 92); the example in Levinus Hulsius, *Kurtze Wunderbare Beschreibung dess Goldreichen Königreichs Guianae in America oder neuen Welt* (Nuremberg, 1599), plate 5 (reproduced in *America. Das frühe Bild der Neuen Welt*, ex. cat. [Munich, 1992], 40); or Antonio Tempesta's rendering of a *simivulpa* in his *Nova raccolta de li animali più curiosi del mondo* (1st ed. Rome, ca. 1600; Rome, 1650), fig. 184, where the opossum appears alongside other exotic creatures such as giraffes, zebras, armadillos, satyrs, unicorns, and mermaids. See also note 39 below.

the animal as “presumably a llama.”<sup>32</sup> But the presence of a baby poking its head out from what would seem to be a pouch between the animal’s hind legs suggests that she is, instead, a marsupial.<sup>33</sup> Admittedly, she resembles no known species. A creature of artifice tied only tenuously to reality, she is in every sense a Mannerist opossum: one might even call her the Opossum of the Long Neck.

A somewhat later example, and for our purposes more directly relevant, is the odd-looking creature reclining on strapwork in the lower right corner of the title page to the second edition of Cornelis de Jode’s great atlas *Speculum orbis terrae*, published in Antwerp in 1593 (Figure 15.6).<sup>34</sup> With a pouch at her chest in which she carries two offspring, this animal is unmistakably a marsupial and her role, once again, is to symbolize America, just as the animals in the other three corners of the page—the horse, the camel, and the lion—are the attributes, respectively, of Europe, Asia, and Africa.<sup>35</sup>

The 1593 title page to the Antwerp atlas is almost certainly the visual source behind the emblem in Don Fernando’s thesis print from nine years later. The marsupials differ in pose—one reclines and the other sits upright—but are similar in most other respects. Both have a long thick neck and a prominent pouch which hangs down from just below the shoulders.<sup>36</sup> A still more striking point of comparison is the fact that both are paired with lions. In the title page, the pairing is incidental: the lion and the marsupial represent different continents and so, by definition, do not share the same space; to the extent that they turn and seem to look toward each other, no narrative connection is implied. In the emblem, on the other hand, the pairing is real; the lion and the marsupial inhabit the same landscape, one approaching and actively threatening the other. Since lions are not the natural pre-

<sup>32</sup> Hugh Honour, *The New Golden Land: European Images of America from the Discoveries to the Present Time* (New York, 1975), 85.

<sup>33</sup> Parrish, “Female Opossum,” 486–87.

<sup>34</sup> The atlas was originally published by Cornelis’s father Gerard de Jode in 1578, under the title *Speculum orbis terrarum*.

<sup>35</sup> On the allegorical representation of America, see Honour, *European Vision*, 112–22; *idem*, *New Golden Land*, 84–117. America is usually accompanied by either an alligator (Cesare Ripa, *Iconologia*, 1603 and later editions) or an armadillo (see, for example, Stefano della Bella’s *America* in his 1644 series of geographical flash cards or Bernini’s Four Rivers fountain in Piazza Navona, 1648–51). After 1600 it is rare to find an opossum playing the part of America’s animal attribute; in fact, I know of not a single example.

<sup>36</sup> In one important respect, Villamena departs from his model: he gives his marsupial cloven hooves in place of the five-fingered paws that the animal actually has and that De Jode depicts. Perhaps, as he drew, his eye strayed from the marsupial in the lower right corner to the cloven-hoofed camel in upper right corner of the title page.



Figure 15.6. Title page, from Cornelis de Jode, *Speculum orbis terrae*, 2d ed., Antwerp, 1593 (John Carter Brown Library).

dators of marsupials, it was presumably seeing the two animals juxtaposed on the title page of the Antwerp atlas that suggested to Villamena the idea of pairing them. Its derivation from the title page also explains the surprising scale of the marsupial in Villamena's engraving. De Jode was not trying to indicate the relative sizes of the animals he selected to represent the Four Continents; his is a decorative composition, in which symmetry takes precedence over naturalism. Thus the horse, the camel, the lion, and the opossum are all roughly the same size. Wrongly assuming from this that opossums are as big as camels, Villamena depicts her this way in his emblem. (If he knew Delaune's etching, he may have been further misled by the size of the marsupial "llama" in that work.)

From the title page of an atlas to an emblem of parenthood in a learned Jesuit thesis print requires no great leap.<sup>37</sup> Almost certainly, Villamena and his iconographic adviser Padre Stefonio would have had access to De Jode's engraving in the library of the Collegio Romano. The Jesuits were avid consumers of atlases, which were essential tools in both their educational and their missionary enterprises, and the latest edition of a work as important as De Jode's is bound to have been in the collection. Indeed, it is possible that Stefonio turned to this source precisely because of its geographical connotations. The animals in the four corners of the thesis print do not stand for the Four Continents, as they do in De Jode's title page. But the inclusion of an opossum, a creature from the Spanish New World, in an engraving made for the son of the Spanish ambassador suggests a witty compliment to the dedicatee.<sup>38</sup> The fact that emblems involving New World animals were still exceedingly rare—this one seems to have been one of the first—only adds to the likelihood that it was devised with the nationality of the patron in mind.<sup>39</sup>

By 1602, the year of Don Fernando's defense, the opossum had been known to Europeans for over a hundred years. Yet it remained a creature of mystery, in a limbo between the imaginary and the real. That an artist of Villamena's caliber could represent the animal with

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<sup>37</sup> The same title page from the Antwerp atlas seems to have influenced another engraving from around the same time, namely Agostino Carracci's 1596 portrait of Ulisse Aldrovandi. Made probably as a frontispiece to the naturalist's *Opera omnia* and so used in the 1606 edition of that work, it features a strapwork frame with animals nestled in the four corners. The animals do not in this case represent the Four Continents but rather the regions of land, sea, and sky they inhabit; thus the upper corners contain birds, and the lower corners a lion and a sea-lion. The position of the lion in the lower left corner, turning with a distinctly hungry look towards the sea-lion, is strongly reminiscent of the earlier work. On the Aldrovandi portrait, see Diane DeGrazia Bohlin, *Prints and Related Drawings by the Carracci Family* (Washington, D.C., 1979), 334–35.

<sup>38</sup> The animal's association with Ferdinand and Isabella would have only enhanced the emblem's Spanish flavor.

<sup>39</sup> In their monumental index to more than fifty emblem books from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, Henkel and Schöne list only two emblems featuring American animals, both published in 1595–96 by Joachim Camerarius, one involving a turkey and the other an armadillo (Arthur Henkel and Albrecht Schöne, *Emblemata. Handbuch zur Sinnbildkunst des XVI. und XVII. Jahrhunderts* [Stuttgart, 1967], cols. 485, 846). In fact, Camerarius includes at least one other example unnoticed by Henkel and Schöne, an emblem of parenthood featuring a *simivulpa*, or opossum (*Symbolorum et emblematum ex animalibus quadrupedibus desumptorum centuria altera collecta* [1595], 59–60). The image is based on the Waldseemüller icon, with the motto VNA SALVS AMBOBVS ERIT. Aldrovandi (*De quadrupedibus*, 224) mentions a similar emblem in Luca Contile's *Phrenoschemata*, with the motto CVSTODIA TVTA, but I have so far been unable to track it down. These examples were presumably known to Stefonio and no doubt influenced him in devising the emblem for Don Fernando's thesis print.

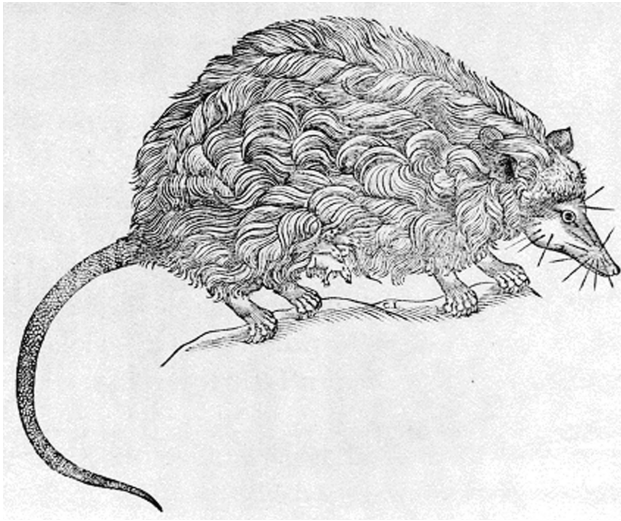


Figure 15.7. Opossum (*Tlaquatzin*), from Juan Eusebio Nieremberg, *Historia naturae*, Antwerp, 1635.

such staggering inaccuracy suggests the extent to which it was still perceived as something quasi-fabulous, an invention, a “Travellers tale.”<sup>40</sup> All of this was to change in the decades that followed. Applying increasingly rigorous scientific standards, the naturalists of the seventeenth century set about recording, classifying, and analyzing new species. In 1635, the Jesuit Juan Eusebio Nieremberg, relying on manuscript material collected half a century earlier by Francisco Hernández, printed the first illustration of an opossum that actually looks like one (Figure 15.7); and his woodcut was widely copied.<sup>41</sup> But the real turning point in the natural history of the opossum came in 1698, when the British physician and anatomist Edward Tyson (1651–1708) performed and published the first detailed anatomical dissection (Figure 15.8). Recognizing the creature as “an Animal sui

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The relative rarity of New World fauna in the sixteenth-century emblem literature is surprising given the fondness of emblematisers for curious and esoteric subject matter and their frequent use of exotic animals from other parts of the world, such as ostriches, giraffes, and birds of paradise (see Wolfgang Harms, “On Natural History and Emblematics in the Sixteenth Century,” in *The Natural Sciences and the Arts: Aspects of Interaction from the Renaissance to the Twentieth Century*, ed. Allen Ellenius [Stockholm, 1985], 67–83).

<sup>40</sup> Alexander Whitaker, *Good News from Virginia* (London, 1613), 41 (cited by Karen Ordahl Kupperman, “Natural Curiosity: Curious Nature in Early America,” *Common-place*, 4 [2004]).

<sup>41</sup> The image was copied, for example, by Edward Topsell, *The History of Four-footed Beasts and Serpents* (London, 1658), and by Francis Willoughby (see Nicolas Barker, *The Devonshire Inheritance: Five Centuries of Collecting at Chatsworth* [Alexandria, Va., 2003], 165).

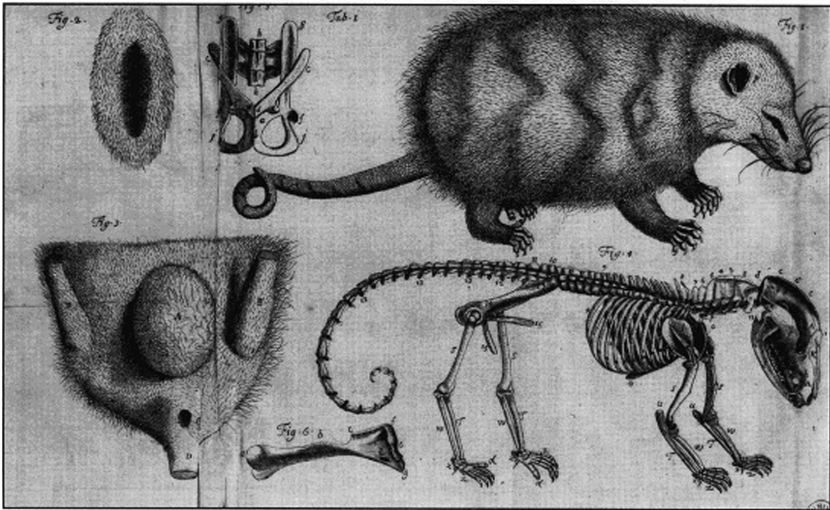


Figure 15.8. Opossum “exact from the Life,” from Edward Tyson, *Carigueya, seu marsupiale Americanum, or, The anatomy of an opossum dissected at Gresham College, London, 1698*.

Generis” rather than a denatured relative of the fox, cat, dormouse, or weasel, as scientists before him had suggested, Tyson coined the term “marsupial” and for the first time used it to describe the order as a whole (for he acknowledged that there might be more than one species of the animal). In short, he argued for a rational approach to the science of taxonomy:

Should one here indulge the Imagination so far, as in the Description of this Animal, to borrow its several Parts from those of different Species, one should rather seem to form a Chimerical Monster, than to describe a real Animal. Yet we find the best Zoographers thus to please themselves in the accounts of it. Nor is it that I do disapprove of these Allusions upon the whole. But when they call it *Animal Monstrosum* or *Prodigosum*, I think 'tis only our Ignorance makes the Admiration, and that Admiration forms the monster; for Nature, in her regular Actings, produces no such species of Animals.<sup>42</sup>

With these enlightened words, the opossum emerged from the shadowy world of fantasy and took its rightful place in the animal kingdom. The kangaroo, meanwhile, was waiting in the wings, undiscovered and as yet unimagined, except perhaps by Francesco Villamena, who in misrepresenting an American marsupial came very close, quite by accident, to inventing her Australian cousin.

<sup>42</sup> Tyson, *Carigueya*.



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